

Minnesota Eligibility Technology System Executive Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Details

- January 28, 2020
- 10 a.m. - noon
- Room 1100, Minnesota Senate Building, 95 University Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55155

Participants

Voting Members

- Nate Clark, MNsure - present
- Janet Goligowski, Stearns County - present (via phone)
- Deborah Huskins, Hennepin County - present
- Chuck Johnson, DHS - present
- Kari Koob, MNsure - present (via phone)

Non-Voting Members

- Jon Eichten, MNIT - present
- Greg Poehling, MNIT - present

Guests

- Lisa Koenig, MNIT
- Jackie Hippen, MNIT
- Marie Harmon, MNsure

Agenda Items

Call to Order & Welcome

Chuck Johnson, DHS

Chuck Johnson, co-chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Members introduced themselves. Chuck reviewed the meeting agenda.

Administrative Items

ESC Members

Chuck noted that since there was not a quorum at the previous ESC meeting, the committee needed to approve the August 27, 2019 and November 26, 2019 meeting minutes, along with the FY20 Q1 Fiscal Report.

MOTION: Deborah Huskins moved to approve the draft [August 27, 2019 meeting minutes](#). Greg Poehling seconded. All voting members present voted in favor and the motion was approved.

MOTION: Greg moved to approve the draft [November 26, 2019 meeting minutes](#). Nate Clark seconded. All voting members present voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Chuck then moved onto approval for the fiscal report for the quarter ending September 30, 2019. He advised that per statute, these reports go over quarterly to the Legislative Oversight Committee.

MOTION: Janet Goligowski moved to approve the [FY20 Q1 Fiscal Report](#). Nate seconded. All voting members present voted in favor and the motion was approved.

METS IT Program Status Update

Lisa Koenig, Program Management Division Director, MNIT Services @ DHS/MNsure

Lisa Koenig of MNIT presented the [METS ESC Update slide deck](#).

She began by providing a recap of the winter release, which was successfully deployed on January 12, 2020. Lisa advised that the projects included in the winter release are notices, unique person ID, defects, federal law changes, and another deployment of the renewals process improvements project.

She explained that the notices team focused on correcting communications with applicants regarding their eligibility results, alerting consumers when follow-up communication is required of them, and correcting the contact information due to MNsure's move.

Next, Lisa highlighted the unique person ID project which deployed enhanced social security number data validation rules and functionality requiring users to enter the SSN twice in order to reduce unintentional data entry errors made by citizens and workers. She added that the project team will be examining three measures to assess the effectiveness of the change.

She then advised that the defects management team resolved several defects in the winter release. This includes a fix to the handling certain eligibility determination tasks at initial application to separate them to the appropriate work queues and allow private program only cases to be transferred to the MNsure Ops work queue, thus making it much easier for the appropriate agency's workers to find and take action on their own cases. Additionally, Lisa explained the resolution of a defect where the system was automatically assigning a preferred public office on initial application, which required workers to find someone in their agency with the appropriate security level to remove it before they could work on the case. She also described a fix correcting a benchmark error when a consumer becomes income assistance eligible following the loss of employer sponsored insurance during an initial

application. Lisa added that case workers will now be alerted to the change in the consumer's situation, allowing them to provide a correct determination on the consumer's application. She advised the defect management team also provided fixes for correcting eligibility functionality in the unassisted path application with Medicare Part A, calculating the Advance Premium Tax Credit (APTC) of the first month following the IRS reverification, calculating Cost Sharing Reduction (CSR) as part of Unassisted Qualified Health Plan eligibility rules (which will impact American Indian/Alaska Native/Household members), correcting a problem where 2019 Projected Annual Income (PAI) spans are not being generated for certain household members, and correcting an error with MinnesotaCare (MCRE) and APTC eligibility when active Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) exists.

Lisa then explained that the federal tax law changes project is a high priority effort in response to several changes Congress made to the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) methodology in 2018 that required changes to the METS online application and the way METS calculates MAGI. She added that shortly before deployment, the project team learned about a federal legislative decision to delay one of the changes the project was created to address. Lisa advised that income adjustments for tuition and fees were extended through 2020, where they had previously been scheduled to end January 1, 2018. She noted that while it was too late to make changes in the deploying code, business and MNIT collaborated to implement a solution that enables compliance with the extension. Lisa added this solution will be quick and easy to undo when the extension expires.

Lastly, she highlighted the renewals process improvement phase 2 effort, which implemented process and operational improvements to reduce manual processing efforts by DHS and county workers for Medical Assistance and MCRE renewals.

Lisa then presented the updated METS 2019 release roadmap, which now shows that all the winter release projects are complete. She noted that the health care application changes discovery project in the lower right is shown as complete. She added that this project reviewed the online application to determine what updates are needed to comply with federal and state eligibility requirements. Lisa explained that the METS electronic eligibility verifications project is now correctly shown as planned. She added it was inadvertently shown as "in progress" in the November slide deck. Lisa noted the project is not planned to start until April 2020. Finally, she advised the Curam Upgrade 2020 project is now confirmed for 2020.

Moving on, Lisa then presented the 2020 roadmap that the ESC approved in August. She noted that there are three changes to this slide since the committee last saw it in November. First, all the advanced planning document-funded projects are now marked with an asterisk. Second, the data mart 1.5 project has been moved from the annual/ongoing side to the development projects side. Third, the 2020 Curam upgrade project is now listed as "planned" in the development project section. Lisa advised that DHS recently approved \$2.195 million in additional funding for this work, and the PMT is recommending it be added to the 2020 roadmap. She added that this upgrade will be different from past Curam upgrade projects in that it is specifically focused on obtaining the technical benefits and defect fixes of IBM's

recent changes to Curam. Otherwise, it will implement new features only if they cannot be separated out for later implementation, as PMT rated the new features lower in priority than other work it wanted done in 2020, shown on the roadmap. Lisa explained that the Curam upgrade was the last remaining candidate project being considered for the 2020 roadmap. She stated the PMT requests the ESC's approval for it to be added.

Janet wanted to clarification of what "in progress" meant. Lisa noted that "in progress" means the project is underway. She noted that on the next slide, the committee would be able to see what phase the work is in. Lisa added that "planned" means it hasn't started yet, but it is planned for.

Next, Lisa presented the 2020 deliverable schedule. She noted this slide shows how the roadmap works from our last slide breaks down into the planned releases for the year. Lisa added that at this point, they have completed scope finalization for spring and summer and they are now in the process of finalizing scope for the fall release, so they will have information about the work accepted into the fall release the next time the ESC meets. Lisa then advised that in the current phase column, the second column on the slide, there are four projects advanced from initiation to the planning phase. She added that cost sharing for MA advanced from planning to the execution phase and is planned for delivery in 2021.

Deborah noticed that in the spring and summer release, some of the projects have a timeframe of "firm." She wanted to know the difference between firm and active. Lisa noted that there is a certain level of rigor to those projects that are indicated as firm. She explained that they have gone through the release management scope finalization process, meaning they are confident on their delivery. Lisa added that those that are targeted are planning to deliver in those releases as well, but they may have not gone through the release management process, which may be because they are not releasing in one of the major releases.

Lisa then advised she could provide an update to the project added to the Curam upgrade for 2020. Chuck confirmed that the release is targeted for the winter release. Lisa advised that it is, but they haven't reflected it that way because they haven't gone through the scope finalization process for winter. Chuck then noted that it is recommended by the PMT as a technical release, meaning it will deal with defect upgrades within the software, but not bring a lot of new functionality. Lisa added that it also includes features that cannot easily be separated. Chuck noted they will need a motion to approve the Curam upgrade and invited discussion.

Kari asked if targeting winter release for the project bumped anything elsewhere on the deliverables schedule. Lisa said no and that everything on the deliverables schedule is still planned and no work needed to be moved in order to accommodate this project.

Chuck asked about the technical risk of not taking an upgrade at this time. He noted the Request for Proposal (RFP) that DHS has released that looks at where DHS's future from a software perspective around eligibility. Greg noted that METS has not had a technical upgrade in a few years and is currently three versions behind. He added that it also coincides with

other infrastructure software that METS uses related to Curam, including Oracle and Hadoop. Greg advised that without the upgrade, METS will have “technical debt,” which means MNIT is spending more time on maintenance pieces because METS is not up to the current version.

Janet asked if when the chart showed multiple releases as “targeted” for a project, that meant a portion of the project would be delivered in each release, or if the release timeframe hadn’t actually been determined yet. Lisa advised that “targeted” means that there is expected to be delivery of functionality during that release timeframe for each one.

MOTION: Deborah moved to approve the Curam upgrade for 2020. Greg seconded. All voting members present voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Moving on, Lisa then highlighted the projects delivering in the spring timeframe. She explained that the non-project work effort will deploy to production on March 8. Lisa noted that in 2020, the former defects management work stream that had been reported as a project is transitioning to operations and most defects will be worked on an ongoing basis. She added that in spring, three defect fixes are on target to be deployed. Lisa noted that this includes a fix so that when there is already matching Medicare Part A benefit evidence on the case, the existing evidence will be updated rather than creating new evidence for auto renewals. Next, she advised it also includes a fix so that the expired transaction log message displays correctly when a proof is removed for Reasonable Opportunity Period (ROP). And similarly, Lisa noted that an ROP expired case note will be displayed correctly when proof is removed from a pre-eligibility verification. She explained that as of January 17, release management is reporting the health of the spring release in yellow due to defects found in testing the ROP item. Lisa added that the release health rating will improve to green once the fixes to the defects found are verified. She noted that is expected in this week’s release status update.

Lisa then described the remaining projects that are delivering outside of a major Curam release but in the spring timeframe. This includes periodic/annual work that contains 2020 FPL-MA which will update the federal poverty level rate table with MA rates with an effective date of July 1 annually. She advised that this must be completed prior to the July renewal batch run, typically in April. Lisa added that business will also ensure the insurance affordability programs income and asset guidelines (DHS-3461A) are updated and published.

Next, she described the 1095-A operations effort, which ensures that 1095-A tax forms are provided to consumers to file their taxes. She advised that the 1095-A PDFs are produced and mailed to the customers by the end of January each year. She added that this year, they generated and mailed over 75,000 1095-A forms. Lisa also explained that an additional estimated 8,200 notices will be processed through an auto manual process. In addition, the team is working towards submitting the annual file to the IRS.

Lisa also reviewed 1095-B operations, which delivers 1095-B tax forms to those who were enrolled in MA or MCRE during the tax year. She advised that due to the IRS’s delay in sending final template requirements, the team received IRS approval to extend the timeline from the end of January to the beginning of March (March 2, 2020). Lisa added that the team is on

target to start sending the data to the print center by the end of January. She noted that they are on track to send the electronic file to the IRS by the March due date. Preliminary counts estimate this year's volume to be over one million.

Finally, Lisa highlighted the data access & management reports, which is an ongoing effort that responds to the METS reporting needs of both business and project teams.

Lisa then presented on the items that will be delivering in the timeframe of the summer 2020 release. She noted that she will first talk about the efforts that are delivering in the major summer release and then why, as of January 17, the status of this release is red. She began by explaining that the effective dates project will deliver the existing eligibility module, which enables METS to consider the previous and existing program eligibility results needed to deliver the project's business requirements, along with functionality that establishes proper effective dates at new application and for some changes in circumstance. Then, Lisa reviewed the temporary absence for MA project which implements a 2019 law that requires DHS to identify MA enrollees who are temporarily absent from the state for more than 30 consecutive days, and to deliver MA coverage to these enrollees via fee-for-service rather than through managed care plans. She noted that currently, the effective dates and temporary absence for MA projects are both experiencing challenges in meeting the schedule for the summer release, scheduled to deploy on July 12. Lisa advised that the two projects each have requirements to change residency aspects of the intelligence evidence gathering module and incurred an unplanned delay of four weeks while their technical designs were revamped to ensure their changes could co-exist. Lisa explained that for the effective dates project, the schedule issue is compounded by the need for an extended period of systems integration testing. She added that both project teams are now working with release management to assess the impact of the delay and establish plans to get their projects back on track for the summer release.

Next, Lisa reviewed the projects delivering in the summer timeframe, but outside of a major release to the Curam platform.

She advised that for unique person ID, the objective in the summer timeframe is to deploy modifications to the eligibility verification system to handle multiple person records, so that providers can find the correct active ID for eligibility verification and claims submission without client or state staff assistance. Lisa explained that the data access & management reports team will deliver several reports each month during the timeframe of the summer release.

Nate asked Lisa is she still thinks they will make the July delivery date. Lisa noted that at this point, the July delivery date and the components included are unchanged.

Lisa then moved onto the last slide, which includes the project status report. She noted that overall, they have 14 projects in green status, three in yellow, and four in red.

Regarding the red projects, Lisa explained that effective dates and temporary absence for MA are both in red for risks and project schedule, per the release milestones for summer. She

noted that as mentioned earlier, these projects are experiencing challenges in meeting the schedule for the summer release as their technical designs needed to be revamped to ensure their changes could co-exist. She explained that this week, both project teams are assessing the impact of the design delays to their schedules and establishing plans to get their projects back on track for the summer release. Lisa added that they will seek approval to proceed with the adjustments that are agreed upon and that will allow them to get to green.

Lisa then noted that the unique person ID project is not green due to schedule overruns for their intended release in the fall. Lisa noted that to get to green, overruns are being addressed by re-planning and the project is addressing resource challenges.

Then, Lisa highlighted the renewals process improvement FFY20 project which was currently in red status due schedule challenges with business requirements as well as risk related to system integration testing (SIT). She advised to get to green, the project has set deadlines for the business requirements approval and is meeting with quality assurance and release management to produce options to reconcile the testing issue.

Next, Lisa reviewed the three projects listed as yellow. First, she explained the defect management 19.4 project. Lisa advised that this work is in the process of being transitioned to operations and will be tracked under maintenance & operations non-project work after the spring deploy. She added that the status was moved to yellow after finding defects during testing. Lisa explained that the code was updated, tested, and verified and the team would keep the project in a precautionary yellow status until next week, where it is expected to be upgraded to green.

Next, Lisa reviewed the cost sharing for MA project, which is in a precautionary yellow due to schedule slippage and resource constraints. She noted that to get to green, the outstanding deliverables are being routed for approval and those involved in the next steps which are technical design are meeting this week.

Finally, she highlighted the infrastructure improvements: compliance/audits project, which is not green due to delays related to two reports the project is intended to deliver. Lisa explained that the issue is expected to be resolved in mid-February when the setup and validation of the reports are completed.

Greg wanted to clarify that the unique person ID project is not in red for the summer release functionality, but in red for the fall release functionality. Lisa noted that was correct.

Deborah told Lisa she is particularly interested in tracking the renewals process improvement, so between now and the next meeting, she would like to get some additional information on that subject. Lisa advised she could do that.

Janet noted that a year or so ago, she thought the committee added or agreed to add an additional testing runway to address some of these challenges with getting projects into a green or yellow status faster. She asked Lisa if that was correct. Lisa explained that they added some additional testing for the reasonable opportunity period project, but that she

could provide some additional information about what they are doing to address the testing runway issues that are appearing in a couple of the projects.

Moving on, Chuck advised that the METS ESC workgroup had its first meeting and that Greg would be providing an update about that meeting. Greg noted that the workgroup met earlier in the month and includes Deborah, Chuck, Nate and himself. He then provided a reminder about the purpose of the work group, which is to build awareness of the ESC by providing opportunities for information exchange outside of ESC meetings regarding the roadmap. Greg advised that the workgroup plans to meet in months when there is no scheduled ESC meeting. He added that if needed, they will meet more frequently. Greg explained that the first meeting consisted of deciding that they will report out at each ESC meeting as what was discussed at the workgroup meetings. He noted that at each workgroup meeting they will have a summary look at the progression of all the projects on the roadmap including current project status, challenges facing any projects and how those challenges are being addressed and updates on project schedules. Greg advised that at this meeting, they were given a 2021 roadmap planning status update was told that the PMT is getting started on the roadmap planning and that they are expecting several of the current projects will be part of the 2021 roadmap. Additionally, he noted that the PMT has started to identify potential new projects. Greg advised that it was suggested that the ESC and PMT members should be consulting with each other about their respective leaderships' priorities to ensure their priority items are part of the planning process. He added that they were given a high overview of the DHS APD process that funds many of the projects. Greg noted he will plan to give an update at each ESC meeting.

New Business

Nate provided an update about MNsure's open enrollment period. He noted that the MNsure Board met in January and MNsure reported that 118,000 Minnesotans had come to the website and signed up for a qualified health plan (QHP). Nate added that as of that morning, 119,500 Minnesotans had signed up for a plan year 2020 QHP through MNsure, and that MNsure's Contact Center remains busy and interest is still strong. Nate shared that more than 200,000 Minnesotans in total had come to MNsure to find coverage, whether it be a QHP, MA or MCRE. He explained that this is not only a successful performance for MNsure, but METS as well. Nate added that IT enhancements played a significant role in the success that MNsure saw during open enrollment. He noted that MNsure completed an IT upgrade to both some back-office tools as well and the shopping and enrollment platform. Nate also mentioned that there was strong support from their navigator and broker partners from across the state and nearly 40% of enrollments were broker supported. He also noted that MNsure made significant changes to their marketing practices and this created a significant uptick in driving traffic on the website. Nate added that there is always room for improvement and MNsure has already started planning for the next open enrollment period. Lastly, he expressed gratitude to MNsure's partners at MNIT and DHS.

Chuck ended by adding that the next ESC meeting date is still up in the air as session is starting. He noted that they will shoot for the legislative break in the spring. Jon noted that the legislative break is April 3 -13.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Adjourn

Chuck adjourned the meeting at 10:44 a.m.