



December 11, 2013

*An open letter to DSS beneficiaries, providers and advocates:*

*Ensuring that Connecticut citizens have effective and timely access to the services and supports administered by the Department of Social Services is our top priority. We understand that you, or those whom you are assisting, are in need, and that the need is often urgent. This is so compelling to us that all areas of the Department are working on a large-scale effort (the ConneCT project) to transform the way in which we determine eligibility. We understand the need. We understand the interest in bringing ConneCT up to full function as soon as is possible.*

*Currently, a very large volume of individuals is using our new telephone system on a daily basis to ask about the status of their application or benefits. This has for many people – maybe, you personally - resulted in long wait times, and frustration.*

*Here is important information for you or those to whom you are providing support:*

- *ConneCT was designed to enable applicants and current recipients to lead the process and to help themselves.*
- *The means by which people access ConneCT (e.g., requiring use of individual beneficiary numbers and passcodes for use of the Integrated Voice-Response and My Account features) is intentional. Our goal and obligation is to appropriately protect the privacy of each person who receives benefits.*
- *Challenges in rolling out ConneCT included scanning capacity, tracking of scanned documents in the system and prioritizing documents by type (e.g., applications, redeterminations). In brief, we have resolved the scanning and tracking of documents; and have moved to prioritizing documents. Overall, these improvements will help us serve clients more efficiently.*

*The Department would be grateful for your help in promoting these alternatives, all of which will help ease the strain on the Benefits Centers and will provide help right when you or others need it.*

- **Set up a ‘MyAccount.’** *Current DSS clients can visit [www.connect.ct.gov](http://www.connect.ct.gov) to set up **online accounts** (called ‘MyAccount’) and get benefit information without visiting or calling their local DSS office. This is a quick process, and enables individuals to get information immediately and on a 24-hour basis.*

- **Use the Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system.** Call the DSS client information line at 1-855-6-CONNECT to use an interactive-voice response line to self-serve. Clients can set up a phone benefits account to self-serve, 24/7.
- **Visit a field office.** DSS services are available at 12 field offices statewide. For a list, please visit [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss) and click on Regional Offices. Or call 2-1-1 for referral.

*We are working daily to bring ConneCT up to full function. As early as January, we expect to roll out the final new feature of ConneCT – an on-line application. We know that this feature, as well as the above means of assisting people, will enable us to continue to improve our service.*

*Thank you for your help in sharing this information with friends, colleagues, and your network.*

*–Commissioner Rod Bremby*