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GVRA

PROVIDER GUIDELINE FOLLOW-UP MEETING

JUNE 26, 2020

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>> Hello. Is anyone talking? I can't hear anything.

>> Hi. It's Jennifer. I'm trying to get our last interpreter and one of our speakers, Eric, into the room, but it's taking me a second, because nobody had left the waiting room when I asked them to, so just give me about five more minutes. But we do have Sharon and Sheila ready to go. So we will start in about five minutes.

>> Okay. I just wanted to make sure.

>> All right. Good morning, everyone.

>> All right. Bye-bye.

>> Bye.

>> I'm just checking. Can everyone hear me okay? This is Sheila Pierce.

>> Hi, Sheila. We can hear you.

>> Thank you.

>> Hey, Sheila. I just found Eric, so he should be joining shortly. So I'm going to turn it over to you and keep double checking for our last interpreter, but we do have our closed captioner online, and one of our interpreters.

>> Plus I see Eric. We will go ahead and get started.

>> Perfect. Thank you, ma'am.

>> Thank you.

>> Good morning. Testing. Sheila, do you hear me?

>> Yes, I did. Very clear, Sharon.

>> Okay. Thank you.

>> It looks like Eric is connecting. As soon as he joins, I will ask him to check audio to verify that he can hear us. And as a check so that we can hear him. Okay. Eric, are you in? This is Sheila. Can you give us a sound check? It looks like your mic is muted. If you could just do a

sound check before we start.

>> I think he might have got kicked out. I just had to re-admit him.

>> Okay. I'll keep waiting.

>> I believe Eric is in now, from the list I'm looking at.

>> Okay. Eric, can you say something so that we know that you're in and can hear us and that your voice is clear for the others on the line?

>> Good morning.

>> Okay. With that, let's go ahead and get started. Good morning, everyone. My name is Sheila Pierce, and joining me today to answer your questions is Sharon Angel and Eric Hardnett. Before we begin, I want to first thank you for reading the updated manual and for listening to the presentation that the three of us prepared to walk through the document. Much effort has gone in to updating the manual, which included input from a number of people on the line today. If we have not said thank you all right already, please note that your support was greatly appreciated.

When we started the update, we first got input from a number of providers, including gates members. The manual is a product of the agency and belongs to all of us, so it is very important that we understand what it contains, identify any gaps or things that are missing, and that we review and take the time to update it continually so that it never becomes outdated again.

So we appreciate your input. Some of you have already identified errors or things that were missing from the manual, and have submitted that information to us, and we've made changes. We will continue to check the document on the Web site, where we will commit to keeping it updated. Each time that a change or an update is made, it will be dated to reflect the date of the latest change made to the document.

In some areas of operation, you are going to note some changes, but as a team, it is important to huddle so that we can discuss the game plan, which is technically what we're doing today.

My hope is that after we huddle, that we are all comfortable, that we know the strategy and that we're all on board so that we can achieve success together for our clients.

Now, on yesterday, we received a total of 51 questions from you that we will go through today. Some of them are repeats. Some of the questions are directly related to supported employment, so we've asked Lee Davis and his team to join us today to respond to those questions for you.

I am going to read each question that was submitted, and our team will provide a response. So let's go ahead and get started. I do have the questions on the screen for everyone to see what we are addressing one by one.

So the first question we received is will discontinued services, such as PSAT, personal social adjustment training, be removed from the vendor tab in Aware? The answer is yes.

The second question is, section \$1003, work evaluation, in section 1003-03B of the general specific standards, it states, rates based on \$17.34 per hour, not to exceed six hours in any one workday. Total service NTE, \$30 days with \$2,000 max fee for this service. A, not all staff will know what NTE stands for, so may want to spell it out. Response, NTE stands for not to exceed. We will spell it out in the manual.

B part of the question, a 20-day work evaluation at \$17.34, or six hours a day, equals to \$2,080.80. How are staff to encumber funds to reflect \$2,000 if a 30-day work evaluation is justified?

I'm going to let Sharon speak to that, but we multiplied it out at \$17.34 an hour, six hours a day, for 20 days, you reach the \$2,080.80. Sharon, is there anything that you would like to add to that response?

>> The only thing that I would like to add, if I'm understanding the question correctly, is if it is determined that your client needs a 30-day work evaluation, then you will need to just get justification, and the service can be approved at that time, but the minimum, or the maximum to start out with is 20 days. But if you find that your client needs an additional ten days, which will take it up to 30 days,

then you just need to justify why 30 days is needed. And document that.

>> Thank you, Sharon. Question number 3. What service is replacing work adjustment training and job readiness training and personal social adjustment, in parenthesis, workplace readiness, close parenthesis, for clients' July services with providers? IPEs will need to be amended to add whatever it is, and I believe this is going to delay services. To my knowledge, providers are not aware of the changes. Correct.

The answer here is that the work plans do need to be amended to reflect new codes. Eric, would you like to add anything further?

>> The only thing I would like to add is just that as far as the services being effective July 1, that is correct, and that providers will be notified of -- are being notified of the change that will take effect July 1st.

>> Continuing with number 4, the question is when will new providers begin to be approved or added? Our response here is that we are planning to roll out a new schedule and strategy for on-boarding new providers sometime during the month of July after we complete the processing of the FY21 contracts. Note that if there is a need, however, for a provider on an immediate basis, such as an emergency or a need to accommodate a specific client, you know, do not hesitate to notify us. Contact Eric Hardnett, and we will make arrangements to review that provider to determine eligibility. But overall, the process for adding your providers will be rolled out and a new time line will be shared with you during the month of July.

Question number 5: Would it be possible to include O-Net codes for recommended jobs on vocational evaluations? In parenthesis, pages 40 and 46. Our answer is that this was brought to our attention and we've already made the correction, and yes, we did include the O-net codes on those specific pages.

Number 6: Can providers charge for the follow-up meeting to review the vocational evaluation with clients? Eric, can you respond to that one?

>> There's been no change -- if I read this question correctly, in regards to staffing services. Staffing services are still allowable for those that complete the vocational assessments. That is no change.

>> The only thing -- it needs to be justified if you're needing to have a staffing for your client. If you feel that you need additional information that the provider could provide for you, then the staffing service is still allowed.

>> Thank you. Moving on. Number 7: Is the selected vocational profile model included in the provider's contract? I'm not sure what the question is asking specifically. We need clarification. If the individual who submitted the question could contact Eric Hardnett directly to follow up, we will be happy to provide a response.

Number 8: The question is, I also saw something -- I'm sorry. I also saw some formatting issues with the outline on page 36. Thank you for bringing that to our attention. We will correct the formatting issue.

Question 9: Can services that require a provider contract be identified or listed? Eric, can you respond to that?

>> In regards to the services in the -- in regards to the services within the -- let me just say, we also probably need additional clarification on that question. In regards to the services in the provider contract, they are identified in the contract, but I just need additional clarification in regards to the question itself. But as far as the interpretation, we read it as services can be identified in the manual.

The services in the manual do require an agreement, and those services are linked or correlate to training services, but if the person who drafted this question could contact me and provide additional clarification, I can get another response to them.

>> In addition to that, once the contract is linked to the provider in Aware, it will list all of those services and then all of the services that are being linked to a provider will also be identified in Aware as well. Just to give you some additional resources.

>> Number 10, continuing, the question is: What is the expected time frame for a new provider to be approved once all documents are submitted? So both Sharon and Eric will address this one. We want to make sure that you are understanding that technically, this is a two-step process. One is that the documents will come in to provider relations to review to determine

eligibility and qualifications of the provider.

And then the second part of that is obtaining the vendor number after they have become an approved provider. I'll let Sharon and Eric provide more on that question.

>> Eric, do you want to go first?

>> Yeah. I'll go first. In regard to the provider process, the time frame on that could vary because the information requested from provider, it depends on how quickly they can get us the information returned. So that also factors in in regards to the overall time frame. But in the provider manual, that is a process -- there is a process that outlines what it takes for a provider to become a provider, and what additional information is required.

So all that factors in to the time frame of completing the process of becoming a provider, which also involves physical services. And I'll let Sharon speak to the role of physical services on that.

>> Thank you. So once Eric and his team has completed the process of vetting the vendor and obtaining all of the supporting documentation that is needed, then the information is sent to my team, Kenya, and she will be in direct communication with the state accounting office. So in a perfect world, that process should take no longer than ten days to obtain the vendor number, get the person entered into Aware and approved for authorization purposes.

So from an approval standpoint in obtaining a People Soft number, it should take about ten days, on average. But again, we're working with a third party, so a lot depends upon their workload, but in an average process, it should take about ten days to get them approved and obtain the vendor number. And that will be communicated back to the provider relations specialist, who will communicate to field staff that the vendor is now ready to begin service -- providing services to the client.

>> And I just want to follow up on that, just to ensure that the vendor is not approved until services have been added in Aware and services are linked.

>> Correct.

>> Let's continue with question number 11. Billing. The manual says providers have to submit billing within 30 days after last day of service, and VR has 30 days to process payment. It has always been 45 days in the past, and that is on the professional provider form submitted with every authorization. So will the professional provider form be changed? And is over 30 days meaning we have 30 days to write the check, or is it 30 days to submit process for payment?

Our answer is that yes, the form will be changed to reflect 30 days, and yes, the provider will have up to 30 days after the service has been completed to submit the invoice. The processing is that after the counselor has received the invoice, reviewed it and approved it, we will ensure that the payment is made within 30 days. Sharon, would you like to add anything further?

>> We want to make sure that we are staying on top of authorizations and payments, and getting payments out to the vendors in a timely manner. We've communicated this to the vendor, and so they understand that they have 30 days to submit a complete invoice to the counselor. The counselor then reviews it, submits it to fiscal services, and we will do our due diligence in making sure that payments are made timely, provided that the information that you're submitting to fiscal services is correct and we do not have to send anything back to you for correction. If something is returned to you for correction, you have five days to correct, and then re-submit so that we can get the authorization paid and get the check out to the provider. Thank you.

>> Let's continue with question 12. Job readiness training, JRT, and personal social adjustment training, PSAT, were combined into the new service of workplace readiness. It shows a fee of \$20 an hour. Is this correct since the old rate of job readiness training was \$30 an hour, and the old rate of personal social adjustment training was \$60 an hour. The answer is yes, the amount is correct.

Question 13. Post-secondary training will be paid to the schools for tuition, fees and maintenance, in parenthesis, if living on campus. What about clients' books? Are we going to make them buy them at the book store, where the cost is a lot more than clients can get from other sources? If not, will we pay the clients directly for books? Also, if they live off campus, will we pay the clients directly for maintenance?

The answer is that we will pay the client directly if the client is living off campus, we will pay

the client. Sharon, any clarification or further comment on that one?

>> Yes. Thank you. So for tuition, fees and maintenance, if the client is living on campus, we will send those payments directly to the schools. We're in the process of obtaining vendor numbers for all of the schools so that we can deliver those payments via ACH.

When the client needs to purchase their books, you will do that check separately to the client so that they may be able to buy their books. Now, where they buy the books from, they can buy them from the book store, they can buy them online, but you will make that payment directly to the client, and if the client is living off campus, you will make that payment directly to the client.

So it's just tuition and fees, and if the client is living on campus, maintenance will be paid to the school. If it's off campus, it will go to the client, and books will go to the client.

>> Thank you. Question 14: Schools are being set up for ACH payments. If we pay a client directly for anything, will they be ACH payments also? What if clients don't have bank accounts? The answer is that we are not setting clients up for ACH, because we know that some of them do not have bank accounts. They will still get a paper check.

Question 15.

>> Sheila?

>> Yes.

>> Excuse me. There's a comment on the table. Can you scroll the page up? People can't read the questions.

>> Oh, I'm sorry.

>> Thank you.

>> Thank you. Okay. So we just finished 14. We will start with 15. Thank you.

15, question: Have all providers been notified to watch the video? We know that there were several providers who were not informed about remote services, and we had to tell them to contact provider management.

Our response is that a notice from communications went to all service providers, inviting them to the presentation, and the notice indicated that it would be available online afterwards if they were not able to participate in the live presentation. We would appreciate counselors and other VR staff passing the word on to providers that you talk to to let them know that the presentation is on the GVRA Web site. It will be there for a while for them to go through so that they, as well, will be able to walk through the updated document in the same fashion that you did.

Question 16. With regard to job coaching, in parenthesis, can be paired with CWAT, but not with WRT, the question is if I need to demonstrate a cost advantage to the agency by structuring services such as a deaf client receives so that I can combine WRT and job coaching, which, in parenthesis, which does not provide mileage reimbursement, close parenthesis, within the scope of a business day, and actively preclude the requisite cost of two interpreters, in parenthesis, \$50 plus per hour per interpreter, plus mileage and travel costs, close parenthesis, and a job coach, is the agency able to recognize the cost benefit of an ASL fluent, parenthesis, SLPI approved, close parenthesis, subcontractor? Our answer is that we're not really sure what the question is.

Is the submitter asking or trying to combine services so that the provider can claim mileage? We are not sure what the question is, if the individual who submitted the question could follow up with Eric and provide clarification, we will be happy to respond to the question. Eric or Sharon, do you have anything to add to that on this one, number 16?

>> This is Eric. Go ahead, Sharon.

>> No, I was just going to say, no, we just need additional clarification in order to provide an appropriate response.

>> Thank you.

>> Question 17, moving on. With regard to WRT, parenthesis, maximum of three months of services, \$20 per hour and maximum of 20 hours per week, close parenthesis, for WRT, at plus 90 days, where is the incentive for the provider to help close or place the client, putting ourselves in the provider's for-profit business perspective, what is the incentive to lose a billable client if cash flow is keen? Note, I am not advocating for an indefinite extension. However, a

review process to determine whether it will be appropriate to continue services, and the identification of a performance incentive, parenthesis a sliding scale, bonus when a client is placed within the client 90-day time frame, close parenthesis. This would incentivize providers to close successful candidates properly rather than keep them hanging for the sake of monthly billing.

Again, we're not sure what the question is. A lot of information here. If the person who submitted this question could contact Eric and provide clarification, we would be very happy to respond to the question.

>> Ms. Pierce, this is Eric. And also, just to clarify, on this question, we know, you know, we're based -- or we're looking at outcomes in regards to providers. But for those providers that were reimbursed -- reimbursement for job placement outside of those that are designated, we just need to ensure that if we're paying a provider for placement is a service that we're permitted to pay for, and that both providers are approved to provide the service.

And we do understand that, you know, there is an incentive for providers to place more of our clients, but just ensure that, you know, those providers are approved to provide placement. And we're providing services based on the need of the client, not on, you know, the incentivize of the provider.

>> Thank you. Continuing with question 18. If a provider is not following the OM guidelines, parenthesis, example, a complete and sufficient progress report, close parenthesis, does that affect or delay payment for the service? And who within VR do we go to if we run into problems with providers complying?

Our response is that counselors need to consult with provider management when they receive incomplete or insufficient information, especially if you've attempted to get it addressed with the provider, and they have failed to respond, either by providing what you need or by responding in a timely fashion. You should contact provider management, and we will be very happy to assist you with addressing the issue.

Eric, any comment on that one?

>> No, I -- just like you just mentioned, if you're experiencing any issues with providers, please contact provider management immediately.

>> Question 19: Who will determine adequate number of providers in our area? Will they ask us, or will they compare the city areas? How do they determine the number of providers needed in each area?

Our answer is there are three "theys" in this question. Will they ask us, will they compare, how do they determine. The "they" should be turned to we. How do we determine, you know, what our need is? The decision is a combination of provider management in the local area. You tell us what you need, and we will work hard to ensure that you have an adequate supply of providers to deliver the services for the client base that you have based on your client load, and the type of services that your clients need. So change the "they" to "we," and take on the role of communicating with provider management ongoing so that we know what your needs are. Providers will often come to us and we will evaluate them and make determinations and include you so that we know what your needs are. We do not want to approve a bunch of providers that -- in a category that you do not need or to have more providers than you need.

So please, given the list that is approved in your area to work with your clients by type, if it is sufficient, all good. If it is not, communicate with us, and let us know. We will be very happy to work with you. You can continue to recommend providers to us to be considered, or you can identify types of providers that you need. Change the "they" to "we," and we will work together to ensure that you have an adequate number of suppliers for the client load and the type of client services that you need provided for your clients.

Number 20. Question: If the provider is a teacher in the school system, they already have a background check. Can that be used? The answer is no. We want all providers and their staff working with our clients to go through our background check. We know what's involved with this background check. It involves an examination or a check conducted by the GBI, as well as the FBI so it informs us of whether the person has a record or any kind of criminal offenses that have occurred within the State of Georgia or around the country. We think that's very important

before we give approval or permit someone to work with any of our clients. So even if they have already completed a school system background check, if they become a provider, or work for a provider, they will still be required to undergo a background check, a GVRA State of Georgia background check.

Question 21: Would like more clarification on transportation for clients to access services. Is the \$15 rate for one-way rides applicable to taxis, Uber services? If yes, how will the clients be reimbursed? What is the total max amount per service period allowed? I'm going to let Sharon answer that one because my understanding is that nothing has changed. Sharon?

>> That is absolutely correct. And if we thought we could get away -- it's been interesting to see how many ways that this very question has been asked throughout this document several times. And so if we thought we could have gotten away with changing the rate for how we pay for transportation to clients for \$15, believe me, we would do it. Because it would save us a whole lot of money.

But this has nothing to do with if a client needs transportation to job site or to school, we will still be able to reimburse the client per the mileage and the process that is in place. So this is totally separate. This payment of \$15 one way is really appropriate only for those vendors who are providing transportation services for clients. It was really set aside for vendors, not for reimbursement for clients.

>> Thank you. Continuing with the question 22. Is O & M still available for non-visual clients? Some clients with intellectual disabilities need assistance on how to use Dial A Ride, Uber or Marta. We no longer have the service -- we could have created a travel training, but that was an oversight on our part. Currently it can be part of workplace readiness. It was not our intention to eliminate this. It should have been called travel training. We believe it was inappropriate use of O & M.

Our intention is to re-address this soon so in a future update you will see that addressed and included. Again, thank you for bringing it to our attention. It was an oversight on our part.

>> Sheila?

>> Question -- yes, please.

>> Someone is posting in the chat that they cannot hear you. I'm not sure if something has changed.

I don't know if we're having technical difficulties.

>> Nothing on my end.

>> Okay. I'm not sure. Someone just posted that they could not hear you.

>> Could you hear me when I was speaking?

>> I could hear you. This is Jennifer. I haven't had any issues.

>> Okay. I'm sorry. And of course I'm paying attention to all of my -- thank you, Sharon, for paying attention to the chat.

>> Yes.

>> I apologize for that. Okay. So did you have anything to add to 22, Sharon?

>> No.

>> Okay. Okay. Move on. Okay. Sorry if you can't hear me. I'll try to speak up a little more. We're on, now, question 23: How will travel be provided to providers for doing group tours to college or job corps, part of pre-eds counseling on enrollment service? Also, if the group is large, and more than one staff have to be present, how will the provider be reimbursed for this? Sharon, can you address this one?

>> So for pre-ed services, and for those vendors who will be providing tours for our students to colleges or job corps, travel will be added actually into the cost of the service, and so if there's travel that is required for those individuals to get there, it will be added in to the cost of the service. There is no additional travel that vendors will be paid to deliver that service to the clients, if that's what the question is actually asking.

>> Thank you.

>> This is the interpreter, if I can interrupt -- can you hear me?

>> Hold up, Sheila.

>> Yes.

>> This is the interpreter. Can we take just a 30-second break? I need to -- hold on one second.

>> Okay. Let us know when you're ready.

>> Okay. Thank you. Okay. I'm just doing a test on the sound. Okay. We are ready and the interpreter is Lisa Schaefermeyer. Just making sure we're all in sync. Okay. Thank you. Appreciate it.

>> Okay. Thank you. And welcome Lisa. We are now on question 24. Is the portion of inclusive academics going to be in sync with the new max rates of \$3,000 that were discussed and talked about at the transition webinar with Dr. Lee Bryan? The answer is yes. Sharon, would you like to add anything to that?

>> The only additional thing that I would like to add is, as you've said, yes, it will be in sync, and as soon as we get final okay on when we can actually roll this out, then additional information will be provided to staff in terms of how to authorize that payment, and the changes will be made in Aware so that everything is aligned and attached to the codes, and you can put it on the client's work plan. Thank you.

>> Thank you. Continuing with question 25: What is the difference between an ETPL and non ETPL provider? Sharon, again.

>> To be perfectly honest with you, the major difference is going to be how those individuals are reimbursed. ETPL stands for eligible training provider, and the eligible training provider, once they have been approved by the Technical College of Georgia, as an approved provider, will be added to a list. And so in terms of the cost, if you notice in the outsourcing manual, there will be a difference in what vendors will be paid in terms of their rates that they're providing to our clients when it comes to employment skills training. Now, when we're talking about vendors who are providing a skills training as a school, they, too, will be required to complete the application process and to be approved and added to the list. However, when we pay for any student who is going to a proprietary school or any type of training, please remember that that training is reimbursed based on what we would pay to a State of Georgia public school, be it a university or a technical school. So the difference between a ETPL and a non-ETPL is going to actually be the rates. And ETPL means that the person has been approved. A non-ETPL is an individual who has not been approved, who has not been added to the list. And vendors have up until fiscal year '22 to be added to the list.

>> Okay. Thank you, Sharon. Continuing with question 26. The manual says \$20 per hour for workplace readiness training. How is this going to be feasible for one-on-one training time? Our response is that it is feasible based on the need of the client. Is there anything else you would like to add, Eric?

>> Well, basically, just to repeat what you said, we see it as being a feasible for the client is based on client needs, so you would authorize accordingly. If the client needs additional time, you would just write justification in regards to why the additional time is allotted for them to receive workplace readiness training. But again, we do see it as a feasible reimbursement.

>> Let's continue with question 27. Also, there are times when a person may need more than three months. As the counselor and client have determined that only a few hours may be beneficial per month rather than too many hours in one month. Wouldn't a max number of hours over the course of time rather than max number of three months and max of 20 hours per week be more suitable? It is not feasible in the majority of cases to provide 20 hours per week of workplace readiness and social skills. Our response is that the hours needed for clients is at the discretion of the counselor. More or less is based on client need and counselor recommendation. So you need to determine what is the best approach for your client and move forward in that perspective.

Question 28: What is the difference between project search supported employment and traditional supported employment? That is one for Lee Davis. I recommend that we hold his questions until the end so that he can answer all of them at the same time. So we will hold 28 for Lee.

>> Sheila?

>> Yes.

>> If you don't mind, I think I can take this one quickly.

>> Okay. Please go ahead.

>> So Project Search is an internship model that we support with traditional support employment. Support employment, provider involvement, varies by --

>> Lee, I can barely hear you.

>> Yeah. We're having problems hearing you.

>> Is that better?

>> No.

>> No. It sounds like you're a distance away.
>> All right. Let's see what I can do.
>> It sounds like you're only coming in through one speaker. We have an echo of some background. Go ahead. Oh, I can't hear you at all.
>> No.
>> All right. Well, let's go ahead and hold those questions for the end, then, and I'll fix my microphone.
>> Okay. That was better at the very end.
>> Oh, okay. Is it --
>> But we'll -- okay. That's better for me.
>> Okay. I'll proceed with answering this one, and if we need to revisit it, we can.
>> Okay.
>> Project search is an internship model that we support with traditional supported employment. Supported employment provider involvement varies by location, but typically the supported employment provider is brought in during the third internship rotation to support a potential hire or to begin looking for employment in the community.

In the past, we've had some locations working under an older model with an older form, but at this time we should be using traditional support employment in conjunction with project search. If there are any location-specific questions, please feel free to reach out to me and we'll help you.

>> Thank you, Lee. Continuing with question number 29. I have a question about the new guidelines in Aware. Will the services in Aware reflect the new services and the discontinued services? Example, PSAT is no longer a single service. I related this to it's discontinued. Our answer is that Aware will only reflect the new services, and not the discontinued services. So for all of the new ones, they will be available -- [Inaudible] -- will be removed.

Question 30. Transportation for clients, maximum \$15 per trip. Am I wrong on how I interpreted this? We've already answered this one. No change.

Question 31: Do the providers have conduct rules? And if so, where are they? There has been an issue with providers soliciting for additional business with VR clients, where the client is insisting on unnecessary services, and this also creates a lot of confusion. Eric, would you like to address that one, please?

>> Sure. In those instances where you're having issues with providers advocating for clients, that is not allowable. But if you are experiencing issues with providers that are overstepping their bounds, please contact myself and we'll work with addressing that with the provider. Thank you.

>> Continuing, questions 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36 are all supported employment related that we asked Lee to address. Do you want to do those now, Lee?

>> Sheila, this is Sharon. He actually threw those to me, but I can --

>> Oh, okay. Please. Thank you. And you are very clear, too. I would appreciate your handling those. Thank you.

>> Thank you. So you want me to read them first.

>> Yes.

>> Number 32. IPS. Have all providers already seen this? Have they all, including Avita, signed all pertinent documents? Just wanted to make sure where the providers are in this process. When will we have to start using these forms and exactly which ones does IPS have to use? Well, this question is obviously specific, but I'll speak in generalities about all the providers, and if there's any question specifically about Avita, I'm available at any time whoever submitted the question, if they want to follow up with me. We have provided some updates for the outsourcing manual, including some forms. I'm sure they'll be loaded at the appropriate time.

Otherwise, the forms that are coming with the IPS manual attachment are the ones we're still using. And as for whether they've signed the documents, I would assume that provider relations has a process in place to know who has signed and who has not. I would have to throw that back to you. I'm sure y'all know who has signed and who has not.

>> Yes.

>> Okay. Number 33. Do IPS, support employment and other stuff Avita does for VR have to sign these separately? Say if some points apply to IPS services and not IPS? I will say that my experience has been that provider contracts are usually handled by the business office or the top management of a provider, not each single individual office. I'm sure y'all have a contact there.

For example, when that remote proposal went out, I followed up with the IPS provider offices to be sure they talked to their contact person within the organization to be sure they saw it. Again, provider relations may have something to say, but as for the signatures that go on the form, I'm sure you have a contact person. I don't think they get passed around department to department.

Okay. I'll go on from that. Number 34. I'm not sure what that's saying. Oh, paragraph -- or page 14 provider invoice payment request must include monthly update with payment request. IPS is already required to do monthly updates. Does this mean that they have to give me a new update, not the monthly one now in use, every time they submit an invoice? Same form, says submit invoice within 30 days after a service is completed.

I assume that IPS is exempt from this. We submit all invoices before service begins. Within the outsourcing manual is a statement that does mention that for IPS questions, you can refer back to the manual. Our invoices come with the five phases of support employment. There is a monthly report we give, but that may or may not coincide with the time you change a phase. So I would think that page 14 is probably not applying to IPS.

Again, you know, the provider relations on here have a comment on that, I'd appreciate it.
>> This is Eric. We have to go back and look at that form and look at page 14 in regards to that question, to get clarification.

>> Right. I mean, any time you do an -- I might be using old language there, an authorization, you will, you know, have a case note that justifies what you're doing. But if you've gotten your monthly report on June 1 and on June 15th that person goes to work, the next monthly report was actually due July 1. Now, they may give you some kind of employment verification form to show they went to work. You might have had that conversation.

All right.

>> Okay. Interpreters are switching to Cecilia Epps. Thank you.

>> Okay. I've got these printed out, so I can read 35, but you might want to scroll the screen up. Will the monthly report template that IPS now uses change, becoming one and the same within one that everybody else uses? I hope not, but wanted to make sure. No, the monthly progress report in the outsourcing manual is the same one that's in the IPS packet. If you look across the top, it has check blocks for which type of support employment. That hasn't changed.

You check if it's traditional or if it's IPS or if it's customized. So that report hasn't actually changed.

Number 36. Does this in any way change the fundamental services of, expectations of IPS in that the criteria for provider review now list measurable skills gains, formal training, as one of the various criteria used to judge success of services. And by and large, we do not involve formal training, attainment of certifications, et cetera, in IPS. With exception only, which I have not yet run in to.

To my knowledge, the only measurable skill gain in support employment is employment. I'm open if anybody else has anything on that one to say, but that is in support employment, that is the measurable skill gain, is employment.

I think that's ours up until I get to 46, so I'll be quiet now.

>> Okay. Thank you very much, Sharon. Let's continue with number 37. If a provider is not following the outsourcing manual guidelines, parenthesis, example, incomplete progress report close parenthesis, does that affect payment of the service and who in VR do we go to if we run in to problems with providers complying. First, inform provider that information is complete, and if they fail to follow up -- I'm sorry. This is our answer, y'all.

We want you to inform the provider that the information is incomplete, and then if they fail to follow up to your satisfaction, you know, let them know that the matter needs to address be the payment can be processed, you would then want to contact us in provider management so that we can assist in getting the information that you need. But please, by no means, should you just move forward without getting sufficient information, as required

in compliance with performance for each of the providers. So let them know what is incomplete, insufficient. If they fail to get that back to you in a reasonable time, pull us in so that we can say, hey, invoice is being delayed until you complete the reporting requirements in a sufficient fashion so that the counselor can make a decision.

Number 38: What is the process if a counselor or client has a problem, complaint with a provider? How do you file a complaint? In the manual, we identify processes for complaint resolution. It is for when the provider has an issue or complaint against us, as well as we or our client has an issue with the provider. In each instance, we recommend that both parties directly attempt to work together to try to resolve the matter.

If they cannot, we ask that provider management be contacted so that we can then understand more clearly what the problem is, contact the provider, or if it relates to a client, the client to get more clarification, and then based on what is the best approach, try to issue some type of resolution. Whatever the recommendation for outcome is, the provider, if the provider is the one issuing the complaint, will be notified.

If it is the client or the staff person issuing the complaint, you will be notified of what the recommended outcome is. But if you look in the manual, there is a process that identifies what a provider can do if they have an issue that can't be addressed, or what we can do, or our client, if we are paying for service with the provider and not receiving satisfactory service.

Question 39. Let me scroll up. Reads, what is the process if the provider does not understand the VR billing process time lines or referral process?

The answer is that they can contact us in provider management and we will be very happy to help them with that to explain it to them. We think the information is clear in the manual. It was written in a way, in a very simplistic form so that the provider reading the manual, whether it is a new provider or one who has been with the state, with us for a number of years, could understand what the requirements are.

If there is a need to clarify or to provide assistance, please either you contact us, give us the name, and we will reach out to the provider or have them contact us directly. We do have the provider management at GVA Web site. We are checking it continuously because providers are submitting the acknowledgments and questions that they want us to address related to the manual. They are submitting a host of information or needs to that mailbox, and we check it continually. So if you contact us by phone and we are not able to respond or we don't respond immediately, send them to the provider management at gvs.ga.gov. Make sure they put in the header what the issue is. It could be billing issue, need clarification, need assistance, and we will be very, very happy to follow up.

Question 40: Page 134, section E states: Providers can only be paid for time attended by students. If no students attend, do we have to pay transportation and travel time? The answer is no. We don't pay for provider travel time and mileage. Sharon, is there anything that you would like to add to that, number 40?

>> No, ma'am. You've covered it.

>> Let's move on to number 41. Transport and travel time aren't listed on any service and are not addressed in the manual. How will we know what service requires it and what service doesn't? The answer there, again, is that we are not paying for provider travel time and mileage.

Continuing with number 42. Will the provider have to complete the VR participant progress report for all services, in parenthesis, appendix C. We get progress reports for most services, but not for all services, such as job placement or non-supported employment placement services. Our answer is that you really should get some kind of a progress or a report for all services that providers deliver. Otherwise, how will you know how the client is processing and the effectiveness of the training of the services that you've recommended. So our response is that yes, you should get some kind of a report each month if it is ongoing services, from the provider, regarding the work of the services that they've provided to your client.

Moving on to question 43. Will all providers have to sign that they acknowledge reading

the manual, and will this acknowledgment be uploaded in Aware along with their contract?

Our answer is yes, they must all sign. And it is being uploaded in to Aware. Each agreement that providers receive for FY21 has a cover letter and in the cover letter, it specifically states that providers must sign the acknowledgment and submit it to us so that it can be uploaded with their file and maintained by provider relations.

Question 44. It is noted that providers will be submitting samples of evaluations and assessment reports to GVRs. Does this get shared with a counselor or someone in the field to see if the information in the report is beneficial and useful to the field staff?

The answer is yes, the sample that we obtain is to show the field staff and to get your feedback on it.

Continuing with question 45: The manual list pre-ETS workplace readiness training and group and individual. Can providers do individual pre-ETS workplace training?

At this time, our answer is we do not have a code for group. It's for individual training. We need to review -- we believe is an error with the way that we described the service.

Continuing with question 46. The question reads: The supported employment progress reports have a from and to date for stabilization. I thought this was going to be changed to one blank for one date instead of a date range. Is that no longer the case? Lee or Sharon, can you respond to that, please?

>> I'm here. Yes. The new invoice has been developed. It is on the GVRA SharePoint, and it has been submitted for the manual. So I guess the answer is yes, there is a new invoice that does only have one blank and it was submitted with the other materials for the outsourcing manual.

>> Thank you. Continuing with question 47. Will placement be provided as an ala carte service separate from reported employment placement? Eric, can you respond to that one, please?

>> Yes, I sure can. Job placement is still ala carte service for those who need to provide services outside of supported employment. In other words, for those providers that are providing those step services, those services consist of job placement services. So if you have any questions on any particular provider, please contact me and I can clarify if that provider is approved to provide job placement services. Thank you.

>> Thank you. Question 48: What will be the new credential for vocational evaluators?

Our answer is for assessment services, the criteria is listed in the manual. If you are referring to something other than that, if you will contact us with clarification, we would be happy to provide a further response.

Question 49. What was the reasoning behind the change in percentage for job coaching for CSE? Was 20 percent, now is 30 percent -- now is 30 percent to be considered stabilized? Lee or Sharon, again.

>> Okay. This is Sharon. Lee had to leave for another meeting, so he gave me this one, but for customized, it should still be 30, to our knowledge always was 30. The 20 percent is for traditional and for IPS. The 30 percent addresses individuals that may have more ongoing support needs. That's the customized.

>> Thank you very much. Question 50: For the transportation, is the \$15 round trip or one way? Is this all we can pay towards Uber, Lyft, taxi, et cetera? We've answered this. The \$15 is one way. Sharon or Eric, do you want to add anything to that?

>> This is Eric. I think we've answered it.

>> Okay.

>> So if they have any questions, just contact us and we'll clarify if there's any additional questions.

>> Question 51: My question is for unannounced visits. The manual does not say who is authorized to make these visits, and I failed to read the question states provider program reviews site visit. This is the section that this question is related to. So the question is the manual does not say who is authorized to make these visits.

Our response is that provider management staff. This is something that we've been doing

ongoing and plan to do more of. The purpose is to ensure that providers are in compliance with our requirements that they are delivering services as required, that they are meeting all of the contract requirements, and it's a good opportunity for them to kind of showcase their services and their activities to let us know what they're doing, and for them to just stay on their P's and Q's knowing that at any time GVRA staff may make a site visit. So we think it's a good idea, the ones that we conducted so far have been successful. Again, it's an opportunity for us to spend time with the provider at their location touring their facility, meeting their staff, looking at their record-keeping, talking to some of our clients who are there receiving services, and when we conduct those site visits, we also talk to counselors to find out the working relationship between you and the provider.

The attempt is to have ongoing contact evaluations and review to ensure that you're receiving the best services from providers within the State of Georgia.

Now, that ends the list of questions. The time is 11:10. Again, thank you for reading the manual. Thank you for going through the presentation that we have on the Web site. Thank you for your questions.

For those of you who we indicated that we were not sure of exactly what the question is, we invite you to follow up with us. You can contact Eric Hardnett. You can E-mail me, Sheila Pierce. You can E-mail Sharon Angel. You can send your E-mail to our group mailbox, provider management@gvs.ga.gov. We will be very happy to respond to whatever question you asked to get clarification.

And again, this is a team effort. This is a team document. We ask that since it has been updated with input from many of you, including our team, that we use this as a guide, and think of it as a positive approach to moving forward with our relationships dealing with providers within the State of Georgia for vocational rehabilitation services.

Again, thank you, and have a good rest of the day. Happy Friday, and enjoy your weekend! Take care.

Jennifer, did you have any closing words?

>> I do not. Just thank you, and apologize again for any technical difficulties. We'll be hammering these out as we get our account updated, and I think you guys provided some great information and answered a lot of questions today. So thank you all. Have a good day.

>> All right. Bye-bye.

>> Thank you. Bye-bye.