

Fran Heil, from FNS-QC, gives the following statement about the new system:

“The SNAP-QCS system is the new system to be used for States to transmit their QC review findings to FNS. The new system is web based and will be a tremendous improvement over what we are currently using. The system will go live for States at the beginning of October 2010 (maybe late September). This is a web based system that can be used from any location using e-Authentication credentials to get into the system. We will be asking everyone to get e-Auth certified as we get closer to the release date of the system. We don't want to start this too early as there are time limits during which you would need to use the password or it will expire.

The system has been going through pilot testing during the current year. All of the feedback we have received has been considered and the improvements to the system have been very well received by the pilot users.

The system can be used in two ways. States may use it as a download system where they use the file format for the QC forms and transmit all of the data as a single action. Some states currently do this with the SNAP-QCS legacy system (formerly known as FSQCS). What is even nicer to use is to use the full functionality of the system to have either data entry staff enter the review results or to have QC review staff enter the results as they work on their cases. Either way the system is designed to be helpful. If you are used to just entering data and tabbing through the fields it will work that way. It also has drop down boxes that provide the choices that a reviewer would make for easy selection of the correct entry to make. The system also is very helpful in identifying those entries that don't comply with the SNAP policies. This would help users identify those items that need fixing.

The system also has multiple levels of user roles to accommodate the use by Reviewers, Data Entry Staff, Supervisors and Managers. It works through the workflow of what each role would do. The system also keeps track of all of the changes that occur for you to easily track the work activity.

For those states that have been actively participating in the pilot, you have a pretty good idea of how the system works. Approximately half of the States have participated in the pilot. For those who have not yet seen it in the current stage of development we will have a couple of opportunities for you to see it before it goes live.

In a couple of weeks there will be a workshop at the Tri-Regionals meeting where several states that have been pilot testing will share their experiences. Also on that panel will be one of the FNS staff who has actively participated in working with our contractors on the detail work.

The big opportunity that will be coming will occur at the NAPIPM meeting. I hope that many of you will take the opportunity to go to the NAPIPM conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts during the last week in August. FNS will have AcuSys (our computer

contractor) staff at the meeting to do a presentation of the State SNAP-QCS system to show what it looks like and how it works. The session will be recorded for sharing for those who cannot attend. AcuSys will also have a table where everyone will be welcome to speak to the staff who designed the system. You will be able to ask any questions and voice any concerns. This was also done at last year's NAPIPM meeting. Those who choose to talk to our contractors found it to be very valuable. We also plan to have a small number of computers on sight that will be available for people to sit down and play in the system. There will be a staff person from AcuSys there to assist. This is a great opportunity that I hope everyone will take advantage of.

Following the NAPIPM meeting FNS and the AcuSys staff will be evaluating how well everything has gone and determine what additional things we need to do to make sure that everyone has had the opportunity to know what is going on prior to the system going live in October 2010. We will conduct Live Meeting sessions as necessary. The users manuals will be available at the very end of September. Information about eAuthentication and how to get an eAuth credentials will be done later in August or early September. When the system goes live there will be a Helpdesk manned by the AcuSys staff to help all users that need assistance.”

I want to make clear that all QC reviews for the FY 2011 review period will be done using the new system. At the conclusion of the work on the FY 2010 review period the SNAP-QCS legacy system will be taken down for the State users. I expect the transition to go smoothly as we have worked very hard to make the system easy for users to navigate the system. I believe that our experience with the pilot testing has shown that much of the way the system works comes very naturally to people that have been doing QC work.”