

## February 2021 HMIS Webinar Transcript

**00:00 Meradith Alspaugh:** Welcome again, everyone. My name is Meradith Alspaugh. I know you're used to seeing Mary Schwartz in this role. She was not able to join us today. I'm going to substitute for her today and try to fill her big shoes with managing this call. Just a couple of reminders here, couple housekeeping things we'll talk through. The purpose of this call today – why are you here? You're here because you are an HMIS lead or system administrator. And because you are invested in the HUD/SNAPS in your community. And you care about HMIS and you want to hear the latest and greatest that HUD and everyone has to offer and say about HMIS. You may also be participating in the ESG-CV uploading into Sage because of CARES Act funding. And then on the call this month you might also be a CoC leader who has joined especially, so that you can participate in the LSA Feedback session. We will be very interested to hear your feedback today later in the call. So if this is your first time on this call, welcome. We are very glad you have joined us today.

**01:45 MA:** During the call today, as per usual, all participants are muted. There is a Q&A box. Please feel free to use it, feel free to use the Q&A box to ask all of us questions. It would be very helpful if you do that, if you would put some context to your question, maybe reference the slide number or topic. Sometimes there are hundreds of questions, and we might not see it while the actual topic you're referencing is on screen. So if you could add a reference that would be helpful.

**02:25 MA:** We are recording this presentation. We will post the slides and the recording through the SysAdmin hub and you will be notified via an announcement when those are posted. We usually get them up within about a week or so. Look for them there. After the call, if there's a question you did not get an answer to or you have more questions you want some help with, please feel free to submit an AAQ on the HUD Exchange. Make sure you select "HMIS" on step 2 in the "question is related to" part. Also if you can reference the slide number there too that would be great, that way we know specifically what section we should go back and reference so we can better answer your question. And of course let us know you were on the SysAdmin webinar, that'd be great.

**03:39 MA:** So, we have quite a few folks on the phone now. Thank you to all for joining. Just real quickly now. Just so you know who's on the phone. We have Fran Ledger from HUD from the SNAPS office. We have myself, Meradith Alspaugh from The Partnership Center. We have Scott Glodin, also from the Partnership Center; Jesse Jorstad, from Abt Associates; Stephanie Reinauer, also from Abt Associates; Brian Roccapriore from Cloudburst. And on the back end, running our tech for us today, is Melissa Witham from C4 Innovations. So, we've got quite a crew here to help us get through all of the content and all of your questions.

**04:40 MA:** Our agenda for today – Fran is going to talk through some HUD updates with reporting deadlines and reminders and vaccine information. Scott is going to go through some ESG-CV tips and tricks. I'm going to talk about data standards. We've got a whole section here on LSA Feedback, a debrief. Jesse's going to lead us through a lot of that. Stephanie's going to talk through Stella P. And then, time permitting, we will go through and answer questions that you all may have. With all of that said, I'm going to turn this over to Fran, who will be providing us with some HUD updates.

**05:33 Fran Ledger:** Thank you, Meradith. Thank you all for joining us today. I appreciate your time and all of your energy and the work that you do. Just some quick reporting reminders, there's

not a lot here. The deadline for the system performance measures is March 1<sup>st</sup>, coming up right around the corner. And we put some stats down there, you can see. We have the number of communities that have submitted, those that are in progress, and those that have not yet started. We have quite a few folks who have not started yet. That gives you a feeling of where you're at in this process compared with some other communities. The Point in Time Count and Housing Inventory Count submissions we anticipate the deadline will be the same – April 30, 2021. The submission opening has not started yet. We anticipate that will happen soon. And you'll get an announcement on our listserv and the HUD exchange, when that opens. And then of course there will be some supporting material to help folks out, that will come out.

**07:09 FL:** There's a lot of effort going on around vaccines for COVID. So we wanted to take a few minutes and Brian is going to get into details about some materials and some resources that are becoming available on some great work that's been happening between HUD and other partners, hoping to make sure that the folks that we work with are getting access to the . So it's really critical for HUD that we're ensuring the demographics of people experiencing homelessness, that the vaccination is mirroring those demographics of other populations that are getting vaccinated. So what we don't want to see is that the homeless population is not getting the same level of access. And we also know that we have portions of people that are having more difficulty with COVID, and this has to do with a lot of things. But one of the critical messaging that's coming out, and especially if you've been on the office hours that happen on Friday, the last couple of them, you'll have heard from several folks from HUD and from the CDC, is that COVID-19 pandemic has amplified what's happening around historic and current discrimination that's experienced by racial and ethnic minority groups and people experiencing homelessness. And underlying health and racial social inequalities have resulted in Black, indigenous, and people of color experiencing greater disproportionate impact with this disease.

**09:50 FL:** So we want to make sure that people are getting vaccinated, and that we're reducing the severe morbidity and mortality among people experiencing homelessness, which will require confronting racial inequities and building vaccine confidence. So a lot of the materials that are coming up are to address these things, and also have a racial equity lens. So I hope you'll see that with the stuff that's coming out. So we have these goals and objectives that have been developed often, and they focus on these things. And a big piece of this is data, so that's... I'm going to turn this over to Brian, so that he can talk a little bit about the data aspect of this and what's being developed. So I'll turn it over to you, Brian.

**10:54 Brian Roccapriore:** Thank you, Fran. Can I get a thumbs up if folks can hear me? Yes. Okay, fantastic. I got disconnected for a little bit there, so I only caught the second half of what Fran said. So I am bound to repeat some of what she just said, so my apologies there. There are going to be four different data-related documents about vaccines that have either come out or are about to come out or will come out in the near future. The first is the Data Considerations doc that's out already. I'm going to just spend a few minutes talking about the IIS doc today and spend most of my time talking about the HMIS Options doc. The fourth document that's going to be coming out in a couple of weeks from now will go more in-depth on more concrete examples about how communities can actually use the data they collect with the focus on what Fran was just talking about, which is the equitable distribution of the vaccine? So really quickly, the IIS doc. What's an IIS, you ask? That's a great question. An immunization information system. So what those are, are the data collection systems for immunizations that are managed by local public health systems. The document's a starting point for communities that are going to want to think about sharing data

between an HMIS and IIS. Because they're all locally run, all of those decisions are going to need to be made and worked out locally.

**12:45 BR:** And there's already the examples out there of immunization information system data that's being worked into larger data warehousing efforts for vaccine distribution. So there's already precedent out there for sharing that kind of information. And before I get into the HMIS document, I wanted to mention HIPAA really quick, in case Fran didn't mention that on her earlier part. But if you were not a HIPAA-covered entity yesterday and you started collecting vaccine information today, you will not be a HIPAA-covered entity tomorrow. Just because you collect that information doesn't automatically turn you into a HIPAA-covered entity. If there are specific questions around that, the coordinated entry data. And management guide did a pretty good in-depth job of explaining the interconnectedness of HIPAA and HMIS. But if you have local concerns because there are local laws and regulations around that kind of stuff, please submit a question into the AAQ desk, and we'll be happy to work it out from there.

**14:10 BR:** And there're also communities out there that are already collecting some form of vaccine data. And if that's working for you, great, please don't stop. There're public health departments out there that their data collection systems have already taken into account the needs of people who are experiencing homelessness, and if that is the case in your community, that's also great. But there are a large number of communities out there where collecting data in HMIS can be a real added value. And I understand that this is different from a lot of what we normally do in an HMIS, and that this isn't explicitly housing-related, but this is a real life-saving effort, and it's going to be with us for quite some time. So collecting this data can help the immediate needs of today like identifying where there's a lack of vaccine confidence and help communities re-tool their outreach strategies to the folks that really need that.

**15:22 BR:** Also, communities can think to leverage their HMIS data for reminders for people who are taking one of the vaccines that requires two doses, which are the only ones that exist right now in the US, the Moderna and Pfizer ones. And then long-term, helping to mitigate COVID outbreaks in congregated shelters as time goes along. And again, apologies if I'm repeating it, but this bears repeating. There's no requirement to do this. This is in no way a mandate. HUD doesn't plan on requiring recipients to report vaccination data as part of its official reporting requirements. So with that, my last personal plea here before I get into some details, if you're not going to use this information, don't collect it for the sake of collecting it. As you are all acutely aware, people are burdened with data collection efforts, as much as they can possibly be, and we don't want to add to that if we don't have to. And we certainly don't want to ask people questions who are... Folks who are seeking services more questions if we're just going to collect it for the sake of collecting it.

**16:46 BR:** So with that, we are going to be proposing a couple optional data elements for both screening, and then tracking actual vaccine information. The set of screening questions gets to that vaccine confidence that I was talking about before, and those were developed in conjunction with the Federal partners, Health Care for the Homeless and the CDC. So are you willing to take the vaccine? If no, why not? With some national standard responses like, "It's too new, it might make me sick," and other ones that have already been tested in other settings with folks who are experiencing homelessness. Then asking the question of what it might take to get them to feel safe taking that vaccine. So the next set of questions are designed from the Immunization Information Systems data elements, and that could really allow HMIS to assist in the vaccine distribution process.

**18:07 BR:** They're all outlined in the document that I'm hoping will come out in relative short order, ideally today, but if not, it should be out in the next few days. It goes in-depth into things like, "Did you get the vaccine? When did you get that vaccine? What kind of vaccine did you get?" So we can really allow HMIS to be that value-add in helping people navigate the vaccination process. When they are released, it will be out in the upcoming Vaccine newsletter. But there will be a separate and distinct outreach just like we do for the reminders for these meetings through the vendor hub. If you are... Not the vendor hub, the HMIS lead and Admin hub, but also to the HMIS vendors because we are outlining all of the documents or all of the data elements and their response options. So we're going to be reaching out to the vendors, to the HMIS leads and to the CoC leads all at the same time so we can cover as much ground as possible. And with that, I have been willfully ignoring the Q&A box, so if there is anything in there, I will go in and answer those questions and I will give it over to Meredith and Scott from PCL

**19:56 MA:** Thanks so much. And it doesn't look like you got too far behind on the questions. I think folks were really listening to everything you had to say and that there weren't many questions that came in. So hopefully they'll be easy on you. So with that, let's turn it over Scott, to you, to talk through some ESG-CV reporting tips and tricks.

**20:23 Scott Glodin:** Absolutely. Can everyone hear me okay? Okay. And I know that we are billing this as tips and tricks. I promise you, there are no tricks, it is just a very methodical process of how we go through things, and I'm going to walk us through, and hopefully do an overview. So we really wanted to take a quick dive into what this three-day hole is all about during ESG-CV reporting. We know that everyone is aware that the ESG-CV is a pretty unique reporting structure and a lot relies on a system of checks and balances put in place between recipients and HMIS leads providing dual support through this process. So even though many people are familiar with this process, we want to do a refresher on it, and we want to make sure that any new HMIS leads or a SysAdmins coming into the loop just get an additional review.

**21:36 SG:** So, on the long run stream kind of going top left, down on through. It is the ESG recipient who has direct access to Sage, not the HMIS lead for this process. The ESG recipient is responsible for entering funded projects into Sage and for bundling projects together based on project type. Once the project is bundled, the recipient sends an email from Sage to the HMIS lead or the victim service provider contact with a link to a unique reporting portal where HMIS leads submit their uploads. However, the part that gets a little tricky is, as soon as a recipient sends the email, there's a three-business-day lockout in effect, where the HMIS lead is unable to upload but is able to review the bundles and take any issues they find back to the recipient for corrections. So, to play this out, if following along at the very bottom of the screen, if an email is sent on, say, Thursday, the lockout period will last Friday, the following Monday and Tuesday, and the reporting portal will open on Wednesday. So the last two reporting deadlines have fallen on weekends, which causes an issue for the HMIS lead if they receive those links too close to the deadline.

**23:20 SG:** So we really want to stress here that we ask the HMIS leads... Oh, I'm hearing that we just lost audio. Can everyone hear me? Yeah, okay, I'm seeing someone nodding... Okay, so we can hear me. Sorry about that. So we really want to stress that, although we asked the HMIS leads to reach out to the recipients by mid-month, if they haven't received any uploading. It is ultimately the recipient's responsibility to send those links in a timely enough fashion for the HMIS lead. And so, it is the recipient's responsibility to deal with late submissions in that regard. I'm going to move us

along to how we partition some of the responsibilities of before and after the three-day hold. So during the three-day hold, HMIS leads should be opening up that reporting portal link, and they should be checking to see that their projects are both listed in the reporting portal correctly, that they have the correct project types that they're organized by, and also that they belong to your HMIS. Because how it's set up, it can be very easy for an ESG recipient to set up the incorrect contact and send the bundles off to the wrong place.

**25:08 SG:** So it's important that HMIS leads are flagging if they have bundles... Or projects and bundles, that don't belong to their system or might belong to their communities via p-contact. So, if any of these discrepancies arise, the HMISs lead during the three-day period should contact the recipient right away. The recipient is able to make any corrections they need inside the three-day period as well... The recipient, once they make the corrections and send the bundles back out, it does not kick off a new three-day period. So, everything can really be resolved within the three days, ideally, if the HMIS lead is given the ample time to review everything and walk through it.

**26:12 SG:** So after this three-day hold, once the HMIS lead has submitted their uploads through their portal link, the only way for corrections to be made to the bundles or in the project types or say if the recipient does not comment back to the AAQ in a timely enough fashion after the HMIS lead has identified an issue, the only way for changes to be made is administratively, and it is the recipient's responsibility then to contact the Sage AAQ desk and resolve how that's done. Moving ahead here. Okay, so some additional insets, just other considerations to have in mind. I'm not going to read these all, I'm just going to talk about kind of the main one here. As the HMIS lead, when new projects are asked to be created in your HMIS that receive ESG-CV funding, it's important that as the lead or as the admin you're reaching back out to the recipient and you are confirming the name and the project type of the project that's getting created. So, the project name that the recipient enters in Sage does not need to match the project name in the HMIS. However when HMIS leads upload into the reporting portal, they have to manually match the project in their upload to the projects requested in each bundle.

**28:04 SG:** So regular communication with the recipient on that front to make sure that those things are identifiable across the board, and that everyone understands which project belong and should be associated with which project type that can really make for a much more smoothing reporting turnaround to have those conversations ahead of time. Really, so beyond that, just a friendly reminder to always double check the dates when generating the HIPAA report so we understand that the leads now are responsible for twice as many uploads with the quarterly cumulative bundles in the next. But we really appreciate the diligent work on the HMIS leads part to getting both of those up there and making the data collection process as accurate as possible. I believe that is all on regarding tips and tricks. I'm going to swing it back to you, Meredith.

**29:20 MA:** So I know that there were a few questions that were submitted while Scott was talking, he will tackle those right now, and we'll get those taken care of. So let's change gears here a little bit. Let's talk about the FY 2022 HMIS data standards changes. We... As you all know, HUD has been committed to going to a two-year process for updating the HMIS data standards, so we have not taken a look at any changes to the HMIS data standards since the current version went into effect on October 1, 2019. But, we have been working very hard, HUD and their federal partners, have been working very hard over the last several months, trying to come together to talk about what potential changes might need to be made in the FY 2022 data standards which would go into effect on October 1st, of 2021. So we have been working very hard. We've talked on this call a

couple of times about some different topics related to the HMIS data standards, you all have been able to provide us with some very helpful feedback at NHSDC and through the AAQ and some other venues, so we are very appreciative of that. Today, we're going to talk through a little bit, at a high level, of what the changes are that we're considering, that HUD is considering in their federal partners.

**31:35 MA:** Before we dig too deep in that though, I do want to highlight the timeline, I think we've looked at this before, but just as a reminder, we are in this sort of orange stripe circle here, where we are working with the federal partners. We've had several meetings with HUD and the federal partners, thinking through what their change requests are, processing all of the other change requests that have come in from the different avenues. With the expectation that all the federal partner changes will be signed off on and approved by March 5th, we also anticipate that any of the other changes would also be signed off on and... So not just the request of the federal partners, but the request and the changes that were brought about through these other venues, all will be signed off on in March also.

**32:36 MA:** Just so that we can get all of the documents together, get the data standards updated, the dictionary updated the mapping guidance, all of those different pieces that go into this so that we can get those out to the vendors at the beginning of April, we would then turn around and provide all of that information to the CoCs and HMIS leads on May 3rd, I think is what we're shooting for there, beginning of May, and then work with the federal partners on their HMIS manuals that would be released over the summer, in August, with the final implementation of the data standards on October 1, 2021. So hopefully, this timeline isn't a surprise to you all, it's similar to what we've worked with in the past, to make sure that we are giving everyone enough time to see all those changes that are coming. So to walk through what the changes are sort of specifically that we're talking about, and I just... I'm probably going to say this like four times, just a caveat that these are not final, these still have to be approved by the federal partners and by HUD so we will... These are what we're anticipating. But they're not final. So keep that in mind.

**34:17 MA:** We are looking at some project descriptor data element changes. I also want to say some of these are changes in actual data elements, some of these are changes in data collection guidance, where maybe there's not necessarily a change to the element itself rather there's some logic change or some data collection instruction change based on the needs of the different folks that submitted feedback. So I think we all know there have been a lot of questions about inventory in the PDDE, there have been questions about HMIS participation status, so there will be some changes that we're anticipating making there, to make improvements there, there have been numerous conversations with regards to the universal data elements around race, ethnicity, and gender response options, so we do anticipate some language changes with those three data elements in particular, there is a lot of conversation still happening with HUD and their federal partners about what they can change, but we do anticipate at least field label changes being made to be more inclusive in those three data elements in particular. We are also looking at continuing to refine and clarify the housing move-in date data collection. There have been some questions about, in particular around...

**36:20 MA:** I think we talked about this a couple of months ago, when to record the housing move-in date, if the project is not paying for the rental assistance. So there will be some clear guidance provided on that. We're also thinking about some additional guidance around dual enrollments, again, this has been something that probably is fresh on everyone's mind as a result of the LSA, but

we're looking at how this potentially could be addressed in the data standards, we're also looking at some changes in the common data elements, specifically around label changes with the mental health and substance abuse data elements, there are some changes to the actual data element names under consideration, so instead of, I think it's mental health problem, it would be mental health disorder instead of substance abuse, we would say a substance use disorder, so just, again, improvements to the language, not necessarily changes to the functionality or the use of those elements, just improving the language that is used, some night-by-night shelter clarifications.

**37:58 MA:** I'm trying to recall what those actually would be. We talked a little bit about some guidance around the night by night shelter, but I don't anticipate actually anything big happening there. There's a new coordinated entry event response option. So I think the new option is emergency assistance flux on furniture assistance sort of a catch-all for an event that we heard from folks was something that was missing. The federal partners in their own specific programs have made a number of requests, so there's a couple of brand new elements, one being for wellbeing, which would be for the CoC programs which I believe would include YHDP.

**39:00 MA:** There is a moving-on data element that would be required for CoC funded permanent support of housing projects. Papua is adding a new element for antiretroviral medications. They're adding a new benefit option in W-3, which is their medical assistance field. They are considering adding facility data elements that's maybe even generous. There's just some conversation happening around medically assisted facilities, and how we may be able to track that information in HMIS, that is still one that's certainly being tossed around. The VA in their SSVF data elements have merged a couple of response options in V3, combining the general assistance... There're two Datas, General assistance other and general assistance food or something like that, I forget what it was, but they're combining those into one and adding a new food assistance option. Modifying the seven, which is the HP targeting criteria.

**40:27 MA:** So there's a fair amount of change that they're looking to see happen in that particular element, we're looking at a new education element for YHDP funded projects, this would be, for lack of a better word, a replacement I guess for the education elements that exist in the ride program, just a different way that the YHDP folks will be looking at education information, and then finally making some changes to the logic and related to our 10 pregnancy status that currently has a logic applied to it to only be asked of people who identify as female, but this is going to be expanded to be more inclusive of transgenders, so more to come on how exactly that will all play out, but those are the changes that are anticipated, like I said, mostly label changes, there's a handful of new field... I'm sorry, new data elements.

**41:50 MA:** I don't believe that there are any that are going away at this point, but there aren't very many new ones, so more to come on that our hope is that by next month, we'll be able to actually look at these in a little more detail and show you what the fields actually will look like, as I mentioned, the vendors will have this at the beginning of April, and then it will be released out shortly thereafter for all of the Sys admins. Okay, so I think that was it for data standards conversations. I'll look through the questions if there's any questions, and at this point though, I'm going to turn it over to Fran to talk through the LSA feedback sessions.

**43:01 FL:** And I just want to say a follow-up thing on the data standards, I'm very excited that we're... To the point that we're at, this process started at a long time ago for us, and it begins with us reaching out actually to System Administrators. We asked folks to submit things within the AAQ

when we were at NHSDC events. We asked for feedback and any time that we receive, not specifically requesting AAQs just specific to the data centers, but when we received AAQs where people were having issues with how they implement things, if they're data standards related, then we kind of keep a log of those things.

**44:06 FL:** And, as we see trends developing, then when we go back to do the data standards, we look through those things and say, "Okay, does there need to be an assessment of the data standards?" So we're constantly looking for feedback in the data standards, and part of that is informed by the work that you do and the information that you provide to us, so part of what you're seeing here is a reflection of that, and we appreciate all of the feedback that we receive. And also on the race, ethnicity, and gender we brought in folks that were advocates, people with lived experience, researchers, kind of a wide range of groups to come in and talk to us about those particular data elements on top of getting feedback from system administrators, so hopefully we'll have a wealth of information to then look through and see of all the good ideas, what can we actually bring forth this turn, this time around. And then, we'll also look for the next time, the... 2024, we won't be able to implement everything. We do have some restrictions that we're... That there are things that we just can't do because of certain restrictions. But there are good ideas that we could put in place now and things that we can move towards in the next round of data standards then as well. Okay, on to LSA.

**46:10 FL:** Well... That was a lot of work on everybody's part, getting the LSA in. It's always a huge list. I hope this time was a little easier than last time. We tried to do several things to make it a better situation for those of you who did partake in the LSA the last time around. We had gathered feedback and tried to implement some changes in our process. And so we're hoping that such changes that we did actually resulted in some improvements. Also I want to say keeping in mind that all the things that you did and then your LSA work and kind of going back and doing a lot of that data quality clean-up and work with the liaison helps you with your data moving forward because it really impacts all of the data in your system. But just like we did the last time we want to continue to improve this process and we know that there is room for improvement. So I'm going to hand this over in just a second for Jesse to take this process over, but... We wanted to create an opportunity to have a debrief with you guys. And we did the same kind of debrief with the vendors because we wanted to know from the vendor perspective. They did a lot of the programming; we were presenting facts to them and coaching and they had to implement those things and we were given tight timelines.

**48:10 FL:** And there was a lot of small changes we had to make and... Just as you guys are making or doing a lot of work, they're also doing a lot work, and so we have to balance all of that stuff that's going on and try to make it as good of an experience for everybody. And in the end of the day, be able to get the information that's necessary for us to report to Congress and as a benefit to you guys in your communities and you'll hear a little bit more about that one definitely takes over and talks about what you guys will be able to do with the LSA data. But Jesse I want to turn it over to you now to kind of run as a de-briefing and of course if you want to help out.

**49:03 Jesse Jorstad:** Alright, thanks so much Fran. Again, just like what Fran said, thank you all for the amazing work that you did during that reporting process. We know it was really intense both for the LSA and some other deadlines that were competing with it, we just really appreciate all your hard work and dedication. I thought we could start out by talking about what some of the most common issues were during the reporting process. So for fiscal year '19 and '20, the most common

errors that people got were that there was not one head of households, so either enrollments where... Or households where there was no head of household or there was more than one head of household. That was really common. Also overlapping enrollments in emergency shelter, safe haven, transitional and emergency shelter just by itself. And then projects that were not associated with a continuum of care. Those were the most common errors. And then for warnings most of them were around inventory differences between that inventory CSV and the HEX for transitional housing and then for permanent supportive housing. I want to share with you some things that we've already identified that we want to work on for next year because we know that they were paying for and we see some great opportunities.

**50:48 JJ:** So the first one, and this has got to be the primary thing that we are just really excited about is moving the errors and warnings into HDX 2.0. Now that's going to allow for a few things, one is more immediate feedback about the data quality of your file. We had situations where maybe communities were down to 50 flags and then they uploaded and all of a sudden they had 500 flags. But maybe they didn't know about that for a couple of days just because of the way that the communication was flowing. So That won't be the case if those flags are in HDX. So you would know right away. And in that situation, it was something like the date format was off and they just needed to export and re-upload right? We'll be able to kind of make that a much more efficient process. And then just a more efficient communication group in general because of that. And it'll be clear the relationship between the notes and the flag statuses and then the files that you're uploading. Right now, it was possible to have uploaded another file while your data liaison was looking at your notes from the last time, and then those things would get kind of out of sync and that caused some confusion. Those are all things that would be addressed by moving the errors and warnings in the HDX, but it's also possible that it's going to call some new pain points. There were some flags that were in HDX that you had to navigate through in order to get a successful upload.

**52:36 JJ:** So those were things like maybe there's a column missing in your file or there was a whole CSV missing or some sort of format issue, you'll see more of those to get to that initial successful upload, so we'll be working through all of that, we're also going to be looking at modifying the language around flags that remain unresolved, so we do acknowledge that the note of no efficient notes was both confusing and not as helpful as it could have been, so we'll be working on and kind of leveling those things a little bit, so that way we are communicating more clearly with folks, and then Meredith talked a bit about this in terms of the data standards, but we're actually having a data summit, I believe it's next week, to bring together all the folks who are involved in the federal reporting out of HMIS to discuss some of the pain points that came up this year, so overlapping enrollments, thinking about what that means for the LSA, but also for system performance measures and APRs and all the other reports that go on, we also acknowledge that we need to provide additional guidance around tracking inventory and clarify what the expectations are and make sure that those things are reasonable. And then a thing that came up this year was that it was brought to our attention that the participation status for HMIS is maybe changing more fluidly than we were aware of.

**54:40 JJ:** And so we need to think about right now, the way that it can be handled is to end the project and start a new project when that status changes, but we're going to investigate if there's a different way to handle that, and then provide additional guidance. And then just generally how to provide reliable messages about observable data quality issues for the benefits of CoCs in a way that's actionable, right? So we all understand that there is a challenge that the fact that the LSA is all aggregated data. And so if we find a data quality issue in your file, we don't necessarily know what

the enrollment IDs or the client ID or things like that, and so we can't provide that back to you, and then that leads all of you to hunt around and try to find the right query to unmask that issue, and not all of you have the same level of access to your data. So we want to make sure that you are aware that we are looking at ways that we can try to make that a smoother process for everybody. Alright, so we do want to get some feedback from all of you about how the process went this year. There are going to be two feedback boxes on the screen, we want to know both what went well, and was helpful, and then what also needs to be improved and was challenging, we need to know what was helpful, so that way we don't accidentally get rid of something that you really like.

**56:39 JJ:** And we need to know what was challenging, so we know how to prioritize, we're probably not going to be able to address all of the pain points, but we do want to know what's challenging. I see some of you are excited and are already typing but hold on just one second. So I do want to just point out that there were 300 participants on this call, and so to help us organize the feedback, I'd like to lead us through some topics, and if you can try to attach your thoughts to those topics, that's going to help us to get through that much more quickly when we try to digest all of this feedback that we're about to get, now we're not going to throw it out if you stick it on the wrong topic and at the end, it'll just be a general... Anything else you have to say that you haven't been able to say yet, we'll make sure that you have that opportunity. So the first thing I'd like to discuss is the HDX interface. Pros and cons how did it go this year, there were some changes. So it sounds like uploads were easy, having the errors in the DQ in HDX was helpful. On the flip side, error codes that don't require a cross-walk are easier to understand at face value and being realistic about how enrollment actually happened in CoCs that we need to take a closer look at that. I'm not going to read everything that comes in, I just am uncomfortable with silence, so I'm going to read some of them. Right. Okay, and in no particular order just as they're popping up here.

**58:35 JJ:** So just a general comment that it was easier than in years past, which is great some requests for clearer language on the error codes, a comment that staff is varied. And it's not easy to know where to go for things. But that's a great point. And there are so many documents that have guidance for HMIS admins, that it can be really challenging to find out Where is the right spot to figure out what the requirement is. It sounds like HDX didn't present any issues for Washington 501. Great to hear. The LSA seem to generate errors outside of the reporting range. Head of household errors, overlapping enrollments, that just kind of echoing that... Finding the actual issue, finding that one household that doesn't have one head of household, definitely feel you on that. We sat with a lot of communities as they were trying to figure those things out, it sounds like there was better... It was better overall, but sometimes they were waiting over a week for responses. Yeah, it looks like it would be helpful to have guidance for each possible error and warning and to better understand the communication with liaisons.

**1:00:07 JJ:** We have talked a bit about having a training that helps folks to understand how to kind of go through their flags, and even if you get to a place where you can't resolve a flag, like what the information is that we're looking for, because there were so many communities that put a lot of effort into their flag feedback, and then it just wasn't quite the information that we needed. So we do want to help you guys through that a little bit more. Yeah, it sounds like the lag just really was bringing people down and costing valuable time, so we definitely want to work on that for next year.

**1:00:52 JJ:** Sounds like some folks reached a state of apathy by the time we got to January 31. Definitely can understand that. Alright, Sounds like people found their liaisons to be really helpful,

sounds like it wasn't clear when folks uploaded when they would be getting some feedback from support for making sure that the note levels make it a little bit more clear. Something you guys might not be aware of is, there's actually almost 30,000 potential flags and warnings that are in those files. So, as we think about how to help folks digest all that information, that is one of the interesting challenges. Yeah, more transparency around the logic for the errors that are being thrown. The vendors also echoed that, that they wanted the actual code behind the errors. And they gave us just a couple more minutes because it seems like we're still getting a lot of feedback on this particular topic, and then we'll go ahead and move on to the timeline. It sounds like liaisons were helpful, but... Yeah?

**1:02:15 MA:** Sorry, I just wanted to flag for you real fast. I think there were a couple of people that added in questions that they wanted to consider their feedback a little more. Do you have a suggestion of how they can provide feedback if they don't do it right now? Sorry to interrupt.

**1:02:32 JJ:** That's such a great point. It seems like the AAQ would be the appropriate way to send that through. Does that make sense? Yeah, so... You can go ahead and log that in the AAQ and we will fold that into the rest of the feedback. If you have additional stuff that you want to share with us on this topic, you can go ahead and continue inputting that. That's okay, we'll sort through that all. There's one statement to never have two years at the same time again. Appreciate that, but now, I do – which is a great segue, really – I do want to talk a bit about the timeline. So, what went well? What were the pain points? It definitely was... It's a little bit of a moving target. It's such a delicate balance between making sure that we're able to meet congressional deadlines, that we're able to make sure that the evaluation team has enough time with the data to make sure that those reports are accurate and whatnot. But then also knowing that other things are going on and making things challenging.

**1:04:05 JJ:** The vendors did a really phenomenal job of providing feedback on the code and provided testing for that code. But one of the things that was challenging was that the data sets... The sample data set that was being used for the code, it didn't account for things that were outside of the data standards really, so as soon as real data came in and there were new things that popped up, or for things that were just slightly outside the standard that we had to program around, that took additional testing and additional time, so that was definitely challenging. Yeah, it's hard when these timelines fall over the holidays... That's definitely true, yeah. Allowing to have access to those site files throughout the year, that is another thing that would be great about having it in HDX, is that if HDX generated those flags itself rather than it being a separate program, then you could have a sandbox area where you can just upload a data set and it would give you that feedback right away, so that would be really exciting. It'd be a good change.

**1:05:33 JJ:** Looks like some improvements to the usability of HDX, just in terms of the user interface would be helpful, better organization of the page, things of that nature. A caution against making that successful upload too hard to get to. We definitely want to balance that out of like... Sometimes a file's quality is so low that we can't actually run data quality checks against it, for example, if a column is missing, that would be a huge issue and we wouldn't be able to generate flags that had any meaning to folks, because it would just be all of them, right? But we don't want to have it be so hard that you can't get to that very specific feedback. Rachel from Tennessee 504 says that they owe me a beer, which I'm not opposed to... So I appreciate that, for sure. I do to have say it's a little bit harder to read the suggestions for improvement because there are more and so, we're moving a little bit more quickly. So, I'm not like, consciously favoring the other ones. There's a

request for additional guidance around rapid rehousing programming as it relates to bed inventory in the HIC and PIT and LSA. That was something that we heard from a lot of folks as we tried to help them through those particular errors, a lot of confusion there. So, late changes that vendors needed to make caused a lot of frustration, and it was really challenging. And I think some folks had their notes get out of sync and that was causing confusion as well.

**1:07:38 JJ:** Sounds like just the overall timing of the LSA and how it coincided with ESG implementation was really challenging. Talia's celebrating that they had no fake errors and warnings this year, that's exciting. So, some of you felt like this process wasn't that different from the previous year, that there were lags and delays. Lots of time spent over and above your regular hours to try to turn this around. Yeah, it sounds like folks didn't necessarily have improved experience. I can't guarantee that you won't have to draw out the holiday season for other reasons but noted about how it relates to the LSA. Relief that it's over, definitely appreciate that. Yeah, so while we didn't necessarily take care of all the communication issues this time around, I do think that one of the big wins was the Note's way that it was handled. I don't know if you guys are aware of this, but on our end, liaisons were literally copying and pasting all the notes from file to file. And so that was a process that we were able to automate. And it did make turnaround faster, even though there were still lags. Okay. So again, if you have additional comments on the timeline, you can go ahead and keep on putting those in, or you can send them via the AAQ.

**1:09:23 JJ:** Let's talk about the flag file specifically, there was some good support for liaisons and reviewers. That's great to hear. Request for a drill down report, yeah, we're definitely interested in ways that we can help communities have better access to their data quality in a meaningful way and in a way they can respond to you. A shoutout to the HMIS memes Twitter account, also want to second that. I feel like that's been therapeutic for a lot of folks, so whoever is responsible for that, really appreciated. Great to hear that some folks found their vendors to be really supportive, that's wonderful. A request to add the project IDs to the HIC actual. That's a great suggestion. Gwen really wants to know who is in charge of that Twitter account. So if you want to reveal yourself, you can go ahead and put that in the box, we'll accept that feedback as well. Sounds like, just in general, that the flag file still feels really overwhelming for people, and the locking of the file meant that you couldn't run a pivot table. Just in general a better connection between the flags and the data standards that they're based off of.

**1:10:48 JJ:** Yeah, so to Wayne's comment, "What are some of the things that we are discussing," is there times when it would be appropriate to have a threshold that is taken into consideration? So there are times when an error is being thrown because a single record is off. Sometimes those things are really important, and they would have a consequence for how the data are extrapolated, but we are looking for are there ways that we can institute some thresholds there. Another suggestion is to have levels of errors. It sounds like there were times when there were notes that were accepted and then upon resubmission, there had been a change even though the comment still applied. But just some back and forth there that was confusing. Danielle's going to take a break and go find that HMIS memes account ... delivering a direct link, appreciate that.

[chuckle]

**1:12:11 JJ:** Yeah, just speaking to the need of being able to run that flag file. A request for training on the flag descriptions before that first EW file is sent out. Yeah, I think it will be good for us to spend a little bit of time to see if there's ways that we can re-format the text of the flags, because I

think that they're currently written by programmers for programmers and so if programming isn't your primary function in life, it can be challenging to figure out like "What does this flag text even mean?" So I appreciate that comment. Yeah, so comment about filtering out flags that were vendor issues. There are some challenges with that. Number one, if something ended up on the vendor file, it was just because we thought that the vendors assistance would be needed to figure out what the issue was. It wasn't actually a determination about it being a vendor issue. But it is... One of the things that I've been thinking about is, there are times when a vendor does have a flag that's happening in a lot of communities. How can we better identify that and facilitate communication? That way folks know if there's something that's being looked at for the code. Sounds like there's appreciation for accessibility of the people who are behind the curtain, so that's great.

**1:14:09 JJ:** Yeah, it would be cool if we could figure out if what's causing the issue as a coding issue or if it's a CoC data issue. We don't always know. And honestly, the prevalence of a flag is not necessarily an indicator because it could be that maybe there's something about the newness of that data element could be one factor. It could be that the particular software implementation like there's something about it that makes it easier to make that error, and so it could be just rooted in bad data, or it could be a programming issue, and then even times when it is a programming issue, it doesn't always affect all CoCs because maybe the CoC doesn't have a certain project type that's kind of mixed up in that particular thing, but, yeah, noted. Lots of support for dropping the text around insufficient notes. If you haven't commented yet and you have anything you want to share with us about the communication that you have with your liaison and where you were. We would love to hear how that experience went for you. Yeah, better information about usability standards. It sounds like some folks have long waits for email responses, that's helpful to hear, we definitely work hard to keep everything staffed up, but it's good to know that there were times when that was not sufficient, the challenges are auditing your CSV at the same time going through this process.

**1:16:05 JJ:** That would be helpful to have phone numbers to be able to call your liaison. That's useful feedback. Folks generally found their liaisons to be helpful, it sounds like a lot of folks have very timely responses. Sounds like some of you might be on Twitter right now looking at memes rather than providing additional feedback, I totally get that.

**1:16:32 MA:** Maybe bring it back here for a couple of minutes. We're going to wrap this up. We appreciate all this awesome feedback.

**1:16:40 JJ:** Yeah, so if you have anything, that didn't fit into these categories, you go ahead and add that now. If you don't get done typing it by the time these boxes disappear, and we move on to the next slide, again, you can send that through the AAQ. Really appreciate your thoughtful feedback and your amazing partnership through this process. Alright, we're going to go ahead and move on at this point. Thank you all so much. I'm going to hand it over to my colleague, Stephanie, to talk about all the reasons that we go through this LSA process, and obviously there's the report to Congress, but then there's also the amazing gift at the end of the rainbow here. So for that pot of gold. Kicking it over to Stephanie.

**1:17:38 Stephanie Reinauer:** Thanks, Jesse. I'll try to take a break from looking at HMIS memes to talk to you. I'm just going to do kind of a quick Stella P update, and hopefully I'll be back next month with even more news. I'm just going to get it out in the open. What I'm sure everyone is wondering, because I get asked every day is, when can I Stellavise my new data? And imminently, I think it is a term, the preferred term, we're working really hard just fix a few less programming bugs

as we've had to make updates in the system to accommodate the LSA specs for the 2019, 2020 data. And so as soon we are good to go, we will turn it back on and we'll send out a list or HDX user message to everyone in a way to let you know when you can Stellavise your data. I wanted to go over just a couple of things that are already available in Stella. The "Print All" function isn't brand new, but it came out this fall during a real Stella quiet period when people were less interested in looking at two-year-old data and starting to focus on their LSA for 2019-2020, and so there wasn't that much fanfare about "Print All." But it is a great feature, and what I think is especially great about it is it's something that came really from user requests from when we originally launched Stella.

**1:19:57 SR:** It was the most requested feature is to be able to print everything in Stella into a PDF to be able to share with people without them having to log into HDX 2.0 themselves. We have set it up with a few different print packages, you can print by a household type, you can print just sections of Stella, or you can print the whole thing. The reason it took so long is because of how dynamic Stella is with all of the different filters, and so it was a bit of a programming in order to get that set up, but that is available now, if you want to go and look at your 2018 Stella data or local data set, and then as soon as we get Stellavise turned back on, you'll be able to use that function with your new data. And it's just another way to share Stella with more people in your community.

**1:21:08 SR:** We have the Stella overview video series that again, just not brand new, but it came out when Stella was a little quiet, and so that is a good place to start if you haven't looked at Stella for a long time, and you want to get ready to dive into your new data or if you're new and haven't dug in, or if you want to onboard the new folks in your community to help them understand what is in Stella, and so that is on the HUD exchange, I think we have the link on the next slide, and there's a lot of Stella resources there as well, I just wanted to highlight those two that have snuck out in the fall when people weren't looking that much, and then we also have the *Stella P Race and Ethnicity Analysis Guide*. This will be updated as we get more equity insights programmed into Stella hopefully in the coming year, but that kind of highlights the different parts of Stella you could use to do equity analysis. Coming soon, obviously, as we talked about, soon you'll be able to Stellavise your 2019 and 2020 LSA data sets as well as local datasets, if you want to do that. When the Stella gets turned back on, there'll be some new trends graph for households with days homeless and average days homeless, and so currently you can only see trends for exits and returns data, but now you'll be able to see trends for 2018, 2019 and 2020 data sets.

**1:23:15 SR:** Only for the official data sets, but that will be helpful to see if your CoCs are on track with reducing homelessness and seeing how many folks are in their system and also in the Hopper coming soon is a data universe video and graphic, so the data universes used in Stella can be very confusing, which because they're different for each performance measure, and so we have some nice graphics and we'll have an overview that will walk through those different data universes that will be on the HUD Exchange as well, when we have more fun stuff coming later in the year. We're working on inventory pages, and I think I mentioned some insights for equity race, equity insights and explore data tables and other fun stuff. So stay tuned. And check back to the HUD exchange Stella resource page often. We'll also have some served communications going out, when we release some new things, and so right now what you all should be doing is to be ready... The first thing is making sure your HDX 2.0 accounts are up-to-date, you all had to be in there for the LSA.

**1:25:06 SR:** But if there's people in your community that you want to be able to go in and see a new Stella right away, then you want to make sure that they have an active HDX 2.0 account with

read only access to the LSA module will let them use Stella and then you want at least one person that has write access, which it might be the person that was doing the LSA uploads already has that access, but if you want somebody else in your community to be the person that does that Stellavising they need to have write access, and so just making sure you're ready to go with those so that when you get that message that... So that message will go out to everyone that has a log-in in HDX 2.0. So maybe someone will get that log in and they'll want to go in and see Stella and then they won't be able to if they don't have the right access. So getting set up will help that be smooth and then take some time to look at the resources on the HUD Exchange and just see the basics, know where to go to get the answers you need. There's instructions on how to prepare your LSA file to Stella, which is what we call Stellavise, and a quick start guide, and the resources are already mentioned, plus a lot more. So for questions, you can find us at the AAQ desk, and we have the link to the HUD exchange there as well, and I can answer any quick... I have time for quick questions, probably.

**1:27:11.0 BR:** Lots of love in the chat for the “Print All” feature. One question is that is the “Print All” feature available right now?

**1:27:21 SR:** It is, yep. So you can go in and use that with your 2018 data or any data set that's already been Stellavised.

**1:22:33 BR:** And there was a couple of questions about the exact date that Stella's going to come back online, but as you indicated early on in your presentation, we don't have that exact date available, but it should be soon.

**1:27:49 SR:** Okay.

**1:27:51 BR:** That was all we have for you, Stephanie.

**1:27:58 MA:** That was it. Thank you, Stephanie. Yeah, thank you. Okay. So we are getting close here on time. Just wanted to highlight a couple things here like we typically do. We've got the resource list here. Did want to highlight that since our last call there have been some new tools posted in the HMIS lead series link here. So we would encourage you to go take a look at those, see what's out there for you. Just as a reminder, we will get these slides and recording and materials all posted on the admin hub. I think there was a question for comments in the chat log to be posted. I think we could probably do that. So we'll see if we can get those included as well. Then there's information on how to get it. Brian, are there questions we need to talk about out loud or do you think that we just should stay on for a minute? I see a few questions here.

**1:29:25 BR:** Yeah, we've got a couple outstanding ones. I think a lot of them are specific to the person asking them. So I think we can just stay on, answer some more questions and let the 270-something people, who haven't asked a question, go.

**1:29:47 MA:** But before you go, Jesse wants to share Mary's joke for the day. We came on and folks were concerned about our joke here. So we'll make sure Mary knows how important this is, but, Jesse, go for it.

**1:30:07 JJ:** Alright, thank you, Meredith. Do you know why ants never get sick?

**1:30:12 MA:** No, why?

**1:30:14 SR:** Because they have little antibodies.

[laughter]

**1:30:22 MA:** And to be clear, that was Jesse's joke, not Mary's joke. So I didn't want to... Just give credit where credit is due here. So thank you all so much. We really appreciate you. I hope everyone is being safe and warm. I know that we have a lot of folks in really traumatic weather situations and power situations right now. So thank you all for making the time to be here with us. Please stay safe, stay warm. We're going to stay on just a couple minutes and wrap up these few questions. As always, please feel free to submit an AAQ if you don't feel like your questions got answered. And we will be back here again on March 17th at 1:00 Eastern.