

NEWS RELEASE

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PHOTO: Photos of Kerry Winterer and Matt Clough are available at:

http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/newsroom_downloads_images.aspx

DHHS Payments, Communications Handled Electronically for Greater Service, Savings

Lincoln – Through the use of technology, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services is more efficiently serving people while saving money, according to Chief Operating Officer Matt Clough.

“Most noticeable are electronic payments made to public assistance clients and Nebraskans and companies serving them,” Clough said. Prior to electronic payments, the number of checks written had been as high as 34,400 a month. Since moving to electronic payments last year, the number of checks mailed has been reduced 93 percent.

“Electronic payments create considerable savings each month on postage costs, and represents time savings for employees,” he said.

To the clients’ advantage, the electronic deposit of funds is immediate and it’s not necessary for recipients to travel to the bank to cash checks, which is less costly for them and saves time as well, Clough said.

Additional savings have occurred due to the elimination of DHHS paying for returned mail and the time spent by staff updating clients’ mailing addresses.

“Our department’s objective is to continue to be more efficient and streamlined so that we can better serve Nebraskans in line with our mission to help people live better lives,” said DHHS CEO Kerry Winterer. “Although change can be difficult, the positive feedback DHHS receives is an indicator of success.”

DHHS will complete the electronic submission of claims processing for child care providers Feb. 1, Clough said. Before this change, communications were mailed to the 3,000 child care providers and 31,000 public assistance

clients. Going forward, all child care providers will submit claims and DHHS will make payments electronically, saving time and money.

After that, Clough's Operations Division will take aim at the Employment First program, which provides temporary training, education and employment-related support to prepare families transitioning to self-sufficiency. The program provides services to 3,200-4,000 clients a month, he said, including support for gas, rent, clothing, training and other expenses.

"Program-by-program, we're making progress in serving Nebraskans better," Clough said. "That includes clients and citizens as we become more efficient and save taxpayers' dollars."

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