



## Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

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### MEMO

Date: February 11, 2016

To: MnCHOICES Administrative Contacts and Mentors for Counties, Tribes and MCOs  
Managed Care Organization Administrators  
County Administrators  
County Human Services Directors  
County Public Health Nursing Directors  
Community Health Services Directors  
Tribal Health Directors of White Earth Nation, Leech Lake & Mille Lacs Bands of Ojibwe

From: MnCHOICES Team

**Re: MnCHOICES – Update on technical issues and action plan**

The purpose of the memo is to communicate to you – our valuable partners – the plan to address the technical difficulties surrounding the MnCHOICES application. First, we want to thank you for your commitment and dedication in serving people throughout the State who need long-term services and supports. We recognize and appreciate your valuable work to make the lives of people in Minnesota better.

When MnCHOICES was launched in November 2013, we talked about our approach to “Launch. Listen. Learn and then Leverage our Learnings.” Well that time is here! DHS is committed to conducting an evaluation process to look at what has been learned, what are the challenges and what needs to be done differently to create an efficient and dependable application.

DHS is in the process of learning about ways to improve MnCHOICES from both the lead agency perspective and the State perspective. Some steps that will be taken are:

1. Having internal discussions with MnCHOICES business and technical teams to lay out the strategy to tackle known issues.
2. Implementing the preliminary technical solution plan. *See information provided by Tom Kine inserted below.*
3. Developing a business impact plan which includes Business Process Re-Modeling with lead agencies and working with the MnCHOICES Advisory Committee (MAC).

After further evaluation, a plan will be developed to apply across lead agencies. We look forward to our ongoing partnership in working towards the success of MnCHOICES.

Tom Kine, DHS Microsoft Application Development Division Director, attended the County-State Work Group (CSWG) meeting on January 29, 2016. The following is his summary of the information he shared with the CSWG. Please share this technical information with your lead agency technical staff.

## **Background**

- MnCHOICES is hosted as on the same database as the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC), Central Security, the Social Services Information System (SSIS), and the Statewide Index (SWNDX).
- This platform was selected to host MnCHOICES it has had a long history of stability and reliability.
- Over the past few months, a number of problems related to MnCHOICES and this database have occurred.
- Unplanned outages for MnCHOICES are especially difficult for our business partners in the agencies, because MnCHOICES assessments are lengthy and scheduled far in advance.
  - Due to the heavy workload on assessors, rescheduling assessments has a serious impact on their work.
- Database-related problems in MnCHOICES often impact the other systems hosted on this platform.
- Beyond the immediate problems, support for the MnCHOICES' development platform is being discontinued by Microsoft in 2020.

## **Problem Summary**

- Three separate problems have impacted the MnCHOICES database over the last few months:
  - Database ran out of redo log space due to data extract (December)
  - Exponential growth in the size of the database due to technical design decisions (December)
  - Oracle Real Application Cluster routing problems caused an extended outage (January)

## **Corrective Action Summary**

- [MN.IT@DHS](mailto:MN.IT@DHS) infrastructure team, MnCHOICES development team, and application database analysts have or are addressing root causes for each of the problems identified
- The criticality of this application is being re-emphasized to all team members

- Tighter production change control procedures are being implemented in order to reduce the possibility of problems in the future
- An evaluation of the database platform configuration is planned in order to ensure that it is set-up properly
- The technical team is evaluating the underlying design causing exponential growth in the database as a part of evaluating future platform decisions to support MnCHOICES. MnCHOICES is currently built on Microsoft's Silverlight platform and most likely will move to HTML5 in the future.

The MnCHOICES Team thanks you, our partners, for your continued support of MnCHOICES and for your feedback and suggestions to continue moving forward with MnCHOICES.

CC: Loren Colman  
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