September 2014
MnCHOICES Matters archive

Focusing on people not programs

In This Issue
· Next Release Date: December 8, 2014 · Office Hours · New Milestone Met · Sharing MnCHOICES Information · Time Well Spent · The Key is... · MnCHOICES Supports Person-Centered Planning · Where in the World? · MnCHOICES Messages · MnCHOICES numbers ·

Next Release Date: December 8, 2014
MnCHOICES v.14.4 will be pushed out on Friday Dec. 5, 2014 and available for use when the SSIS/MnCHOICES Help Desk notifies you on Monday, Dec. 8, 2014.

We release new versions of MnCHOICES four times a year. There are specific dates and timelines important to each release that lead agencies need to know:

- About one month prior to each new release, three or four lead agencies pilot the new versions. We may solicit lead agencies for each pilot.
- The new version "pushes" to Production (Prod) and the MnCHOICES Training Zone (MTZ) on a scheduled Friday afternoon.
- By 2 pm on that Friday:
  1. Certified assessors must return offline assessments to online mode.
  2. Lead agency staff must log out of both Production (Prod) and the training zone (MTZ).
  3. Work/practice in MnCHOICES and MTZ must stop until the SSIS/MnCHOICES Help Desk notifies that you may start work again.
  4. The new version is ready for use the following Monday morning.

The SSIS/MnCHOICES Help Desk notifies you through an update or all-clear alert. You may then resume work in both production (Prod) and the training zone (MTZ).

Office Hours
DHS is hosting a monthly "office hours" conference calls to stay connected with and support lead agencies as they implement and manage MnCHOICES. These calls are for lead agencies that have:

- Launched MnCHOICES and
- At least six weeks of experience using it

Lead agencies can ask questions, provide feedback and share learnings about MnCHOICES with others on the call. Office hours does not replace technical assistance and troubleshooting the SSIS/MnCHOICES Help Desk provides.

Mentors and administrative contacts receive an invitation to participate approximately one month after their agency's launch date. Participation is optional. Calls occur on the first Friday of the month between 9:30 and 11:00 am.

New Milestone Met
As of Aug. 28, 2014, all Minnesota counties and tribes have completed MnCHOICES orientation for mentors and supervisors. This means:

- All counties and tribes are preparing to launch
• MnCHOICES users are training
• Qualified candidates are working to complete certification as a MnCHOICES assessor.

Sharing MnCHOICES Information
To complete some required tasks, certified assessors may need to share specific information with others. One of the ways to do this is to "print" the needed information from the MnCHOICES assessment. New printing features allow users to:

• Print a paper copy
• Save to a PDF and
• Send electronically or place into OneNote.

Information on how to use the print features is available in the MnCHOICES 14.3 Release Notes Companion.

Time Well Spent
When MnCHOICES first launched, certified assessors were concerned that one wrong "click" during the offline/online function, would result in losing completed assessments. DHS resolved this by adding several ways to assure data entered into assessments is not lost.

1. MnCHOICES saves newly entered data each time the assessor moves from one question group to another.
2. At the same time, MnCHOICES makes a backup file. This double safety feature causes a definite "pause" when moving between question groups. We heard the "pause" is bothersome for some assessors. We will research this to see if there is a fix to the problem. However, our main concern is not to lose data.

Other issues that can influence response times include the hardware and software being used. Make sure to review the recommended tech specs.

The Key is...
Never right click when using MnCHOICES, unless you are following the systematic instructions for going offline or online. Learn to use your keyboard shortcuts instead of your mouse to control your computer. Here are a few simple Windows commands to help you use MnCHOICES more efficiently:

Copy = Ctrl + C  Cut = Ctrl + X  Paste = Ctrl + V
Undo = Ctrl + Z  Find = Ctrl + F  Bold = Ctrl + B
Underline = Ctrl + U  Italic = Ctrl + I

NOTE: the letter value does not need to be capitalized

MnCHOICES Supports Person-Centered Planning
A core value, upon which MnCHOICES was developed, is person-centered planning. MnCHOICES allows certified assessors to build upon their own person-centered practice, by collecting information from the person being assessed about things that are important to and for that person. Some of the MnCHOICES content that helps support person-centered planning includes:

• Narrative about assessed needs and support plan implications at the end of domains
• Quality of Life domain
• Questions about the person's challenges, strengths and preferences.

Where in the World?
You completed the assessment and ran eligibility. You selected the required screening document types and completed any necessary additional information. You logged out of MnCHOICES and went to a staff meeting. Later that day, you decided to print out the Screening Document/Service
Agreement documents to enter into MMIS. When you picked up the document(s) they were blank. Where in the world is the data?

Until a MnCHOICES assessment is "closed complete," it is an active document. You can continue to change and add information. Therefore, each time you leave the Eligibility Summary screen the Eligibility Summary information is stored in a data base and removed from the Assessment itself. Examples include when you go to a different function like Person or go to your Assessment Queue or log out.

When you return to the Assessment, you must re-run eligibility to populate the Eligibility Summary and corresponding Screening/Service Agreement documents. When the assessment is "closed complete," the Eligibility Summary and Screening/Service Agreement documents are maintained with the final outcomes from the assessment.

MnCHOICES Messages
You probably do not receive emails directly from the MnCHOICES team because only MnCHOICES mentors and administrative contacts receive email messages directly. An important role of MnCHOICES mentors and administrative contacts is to share emails from DHS with appropriate agency staff. Each agency determines who represents them as either a mentor or administrative contact. If you believe you should receive messages about MnCHOICES and you are not, touch base with your current MnCHOICES mentor or administrative contact.

MnCHOICES numbers
The MnCHOICES May 2014 MnCHOICES Launch Plan (PDF) is on target to launch all counties and tribal agencies by the end of 2014. As of Sept. 22, 2014:

- All counties and tribes have completed the Pre-Launch Getting Ready meetings.
- All counties and tribes have attended Mentor/Supervisor Orientation.
- 46 counties and tribes have completed multi-disciplinary learning labs.
- 31 lead agencies (representing 37 counties) and two tribes have launched and are using MnCHOICES to complete new assessments.
- Lead agencies have used MnCHOICES statewide for 5,518 intakes.
- Using MnCHOICES, lead agencies have completed:
  - 1,935 assessments
  - 77 reassessments
  - 64 eligibility updates.

An additional 1,223 MnCHOICES assessments are open or pending.