



News for Immediate Release

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Governor Corbett Honors Department of Public Welfare Employees for Innovations to Streamline the Benefits Appeals Process for Clients

Harrisburg – The Bureau of Hearings and Appeals has received a first-ever Governor’s Innovator Award for dramatically reducing the work hours and processing time it takes to send welfare client appeals to the court system, Department of Public Welfare Secretary Gary D. Alexander announced today.

“The innovations made by this bureau reflect the department’s ongoing goal to improve efficiencies and reduce waste,” said Alexander. “Because of this effort, welfare applicants can potentially receive quicker appeals while taxpayers can be reassured bureaucratic and costly red tape is being reduced.”

The bureau receives 78,000 appeals annually, requiring hundreds of hours of photocopying, collating and case documentation. By next month, processing and transmission of all case files to the courts will be completed electronically. This change will save staff 80 hours of work per month and reduce the time it takes to get a case to Commonwealth Court from eight weeks to less than one week.

“Speeding up the processing time for benefit appeals by almost 90 percent will pay-off for clients and for taxpayers,” said Alexander. “This is another example of how the Department of Public Welfare is making sure those who are receiving benefits are truly eligible while also ensuring those who qualify for benefits get the assistance in a timely fashion.”

The Department of Welfare has been working on moving to paperless transcripts since July 2011 in conjunction with the Commonwealth Court.

In a ceremony today at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, Governor Corbett presented the Governor’s Innovator Award to Tracy Henry, who accepted the honor on behalf of the 122 staff members of the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals.

The Governor’s Innovator Awards are administered by the Governor’s Innovation Office, which works to reduce state spending, eliminate waste and improve service.

For more information about the Department of Public Welfare, visit the department’s website at www.dpw.state.pa.us. Pennsylvanians who suspect welfare fraud should call 1-800- 932-0582.

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