

HPRP/HMIS Tip of the Week #19 Correcting Service Transactions

On both the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) and the Annual Performance Report (APR), HUD looks at what mix of services clients are receiving. While the “right” mix is somewhat subjective, there are certain absolutes that can be derived from the way HPRP is designed that must be recognized. One obvious example is that every client must have at least one Case Management service transaction. In the first part of this Tip, I will cover what absolutes do exist that we can measure with HMIS data. Next, I will introduce the Service Transactions by Household report and show how to use it to pinpoint these kinds of problems in your data. Next, I will show how to change things in the Service Transactions area of ServicePoint because it is *not* intuitive. It is important that we focus on and correct these issues because HUD has constantly raised concerns over our QPR regarding this very issue. Your grant managers will be contacting you soon to check progress on this.

THE THINGS WE KNOW:

As stated above, while the mix of services you give a client will differ from household to household, there are certain things that will be constant. Following is a list of these absolutes:

	Absolutes	Why	Example
1.	Every client must have at least one Case Management service transaction per entry/exit.	Every client receives an initial intake assessment that should be counted as a Case Management.	Figure 3
2.	Any client with an entry/exit longer than three months must also have a Case Management service recorded for each recertification.	Every client receives a recertification assessment every 3 months of program participation that should be counted as a Case Management.	Figure 5
3.	Aside from the Case Management service(s), all clients must have at least one other service of any kind, non-financial or financial.	Clients should be assessed for HPRP services beyond just their intake. This could include financial services like rental assistance or moving costs, or non-financial services like Housing Search and Placement, Legal Services, etc.	Figure 6
4.	All services must be dated between your entry and exit dates/times.	The QPR and APR ignore any services created that land outside the date range of the client’s entry/exit.	Figure 4
5.	All client records should show that service transactions were recorded throughout the time the client was in your program.	Clients participating in your HPRP program should be receiving services throughout their time in your program.	Figures 2 and 5
6.	Clients who are receiving a Case Management plus a Utility Payment or Utility Deposit service but nothing else need to be audited for “but for” compliance.	Utility-only assistance has a <u>very</u> high bar as far as backup documentation goes. Any utility-only assistance that cannot be shown to have met the “but for” requirements will be subject to reallocation.	Figure 1

HOW TO FIND POSSIBLE PROBLEM HOUSEHOLDS:

Your households can be checked for these issues by using either the Service Transactions by Household report or, if there are issues in your data around the way some households were constructed or if there were any services entered for the Head of Household that were not pushed to the rest of the household, you might need to also ask for the Service Transactions by Client report to find others that were missed on the Service Transactions by Household report.

Service Transactions by Household Report (and the Service Transactions by Client Report):

This report differs from the QPR Data Quality report (covered in Tips #9 and #10) in that it is an informational report, not an error report. Both Service Transactions reports were designed to help you find and correct errors; they show ALL households (or clients) regardless of if there is an error or not. Another important point to remember when looking at this report is that the Service Transactions by Household report only shows Heads of Household, not every single client in your database. It is designed this way because when you go to add in a Service Transaction, you add it across the entire household, not once per client. (See Figure 7.) So a report that shows only heads of household is appropriate in this sense and much easier for you to deal with. Besides checking for the right mix of service transactions, this report can also be used to check that all of your Cost fields for your financial service transactions have been saved. While this issue is not the focus of this Tip, it is one that will be coming into focus soon. The Service Transactions by Client report shows individual clients in your database along with their services. This one is used after the “by Household” report has already been cleaned up to be sure all clients (Head of Household or not) are corrected.

In the following screenshots, I will show some examples of issues I have found in an agency’s Service Transaction by Household

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report. I have marked out part of the client ids to protect the innocent, so that you can tell if you are looking at the same client on each row or not.

Client ID	Financial Service Transactions	Non-Financial Service Transactions	Cost 1	Entry Date	Service Transaction Start Date	Service Transaction End Date	Exit Date
06	Utility payments		0	8/30/10 11:58 AM	9/2/10 12:29 PM	9/2/10 12:29 PM	9/14/10 12:40 PM
06	Utility payments		0	8/30/10 11:58 AM	9/14/10 12:30 PM	9/14/10 12:30 PM	9/14/10 12:40 PM
06		Case management	0	8/30/10 11:58 AM	8/30/10 12:28 PM	8/30/10 12:28 PM	9/14/10 12:40 PM

Figure 1: Example of one client with only utility payment services and no Cost saved.

The client in Figure 1 has two potential problems: one is that this is a client who received “Utility Only” assistance. As long as the very stringent documentation requirements have been met, then this should be ok, but otherwise, the amount paid out for this client is subject to reallocation. The other problem is there are the zeroes in the Cost field, which means that there was no cost recorded with these service transactions. For all Financial Service Transactions, there should be an amount in the Cost field. (A cost is not required for Non-Financial Service Transactions.)

But let’s also look at what is good and correct about the way this client was entered! S/he has an entry date that comes first, then all the dates and times associated with the services are chronologically next, and the exit date/time comes last. This is correct. Another thing that’s great here is there is a Case Management recorded that corresponds to when the client received their intake assessment. And lastly, the Service Transaction Start and End Dates (the blue columns) are spread out nicely between the Entry Date and Exit Date (the orange columns), which shows that the client was actively receiving services the entire time they were in the program.

Client ID	Financial Service Transactions	Non-Financial Services	Entry Date	Service Transaction Start Date	Service Transaction End Date	Exit Date
540		Case management	4/6/10 12:18 PM	4/6/10 2:51 PM	4/6/10 3:22 PM	5/6/10 3:22 PM
540		Housing search and place	4/6/10 12:18 PM	4/6/10 12:36 PM	5/6/10 12:36 PM	5/6/10 3:22 PM
540		Housing search and place	4/6/10 12:18 PM	4/6/10 12:44 PM	5/6/10 12:44 PM	5/6/10 3:22 PM
542		Case management	4/6/10 12:18 PM	4/6/10 2:51 PM	4/6/10 3:22 PM	5/6/10 3:22 PM
542		Housing search and place	4/6/10 12:18 PM	4/6/10 12:36 PM	5/6/10 12:36 PM	5/6/10 3:22 PM
542		Housing search and place	4/6/10 12:18 PM	4/6/10 12:44 PM	5/6/10 12:44 PM	5/6/10 3:22 PM

Figure 2: Example of two clients with duplicate services. (Service Transactions by Client Report)

Each client in Figure 2 received a Case Management plus two Housing Search & Placement services, both of which have the same exact date and nearly the same time. This is highly unlikely, and one of these services would need to be deleted because basically you have duplicate service transactions here. You will notice that the two clients with this issue have similar Client IDs and identical Entry/Exit date/times and so are most likely in the same household.

536	Rental assistance		1/26/10 12:18 PM	1/26/10 12:22 PM	2/26/10 12:22 PM	2/26/10 2:19 PM
537	Rental assistance		1/26/10 12:18 PM	1/26/10 12:22 PM	2/26/10 12:22 PM	2/26/10 2:19 PM
539	Rental assistance		1/26/10 12:18 PM	1/26/10 12:22 PM	2/26/10 12:22 PM	2/26/10 2:19 PM
540	Rental assistance		1/26/10 12:18 PM	1/26/10 12:22 PM	2/26/10 12:22 PM	2/26/10 2:19 PM

Figure 3: Example of four different clients’ services. (Service Transactions by Client Report)

The clients in Figure 3 all received Rental Assistance but no Case Management. The way we know this is that when a client receives more than one service, that client will be listed once for each service they received (like in Figures 1 and 2), so if they received more than one service, they would be listed multiple times. Since these clients only have one record each, we know that they only received the one service each.

944	Rental assistance		12/9/09 9:30 AM	12/9/09 9:59 AM	12/10/09 9:59 AM	12/10/09 9:38 AM
944		Case management	12/9/09 9:30 AM	12/9/09 9:59 AM	12/9/09 9:59 AM	12/10/09 9:38 AM

Figure 4: Example of a client where the end of the service extends beyond the Exit Date. (Service Transactions by Client Report)

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As you all know, your Service Transaction date/times must fall between your Entry/Exit date/times. As such, the report is designed in this way: the first date/time column is the Entry Date (orange column), and then you see the Service Transaction Start/End Dates (both are blue columns), and the last column is the Exit Date (orange column). So you can read across the four dates and they should be in chronological order, except it's ok for the Service Transaction date/times to be identical.

In Figure 4, you can see there are cells in a red font, which show that the Service Transaction's End Date is actually later than the Exit Date. Theoretically, this would mean the client was still getting services after they were exited from your program.

Client ID	Financial Service Transactions	Non-Financial Service Transactions	Cost 1	Entry Date	Service Transaction Start Date	Service Transaction End Date	Exit Date
786	Rental assistance		529	4/9/10 12:01 AM	4/10/10 2:00 PM	4/10/10 2:00 PM	9/18/10 5:49 PM
786	Rental assistance		529	4/9/10 12:01 AM	5/1/10 4:00 PM	5/30/10 4:00 PM	9/18/10 5:49 PM
786	Utility payments		430.29	4/9/10 12:01 AM	5/1/10 4:00 PM	5/30/10 4:00 PM	9/18/10 5:49 PM
786		Case management	0	4/9/10 12:01 AM	4/10/10 9:00 AM	4/10/10 10:00 AM	9/18/10 5:49 PM

Figure 5: Example of a client with either a questionable Exit Date or missing services.

The client shown in Figure 5 entered the program in April 2010. S/he received a Case Management for the initial intake, plus a rental assistance on that date. A month later, s/he came back for more assistance, this time receiving rental assistance and a utility payment. So far, this is all fine. But then, no services were recorded in June, July, or August, and s/he was exited a full 5 and a half months after entry. This is problematic for a couple of reasons: 1. The Length of Stay averages for this agency will be falsely inflated if, in fact, the client was not receiving services for the full 5 1/2 months. This is important because of the new HEARTH regulations coming out. 2. Should this client apply for HPRP with this or any other agency within the Balance of State, 5 of their allowed 18 months will show as having already been spent when in fact, they only used 2 months. Also, it could be that the household did receive services through September that simply were not saved to this client's file. In this case, the agency is losing out on any credit they might receive for how many services they gave.

222		Case management	3/4/10 11:31 AM	3/4/10 2:33 PM	3/4/10 2:44 PM	4/4/10 2:44 PM
223		Case management	3/4/10 11:31 AM	3/4/10 2:33 PM	3/4/10 2:44 PM	4/4/10 2:44 PM

Figure 6: Example of a client with only Case Management, nothing else. (Service Transactions by Client Report)

The two clients in Figure 6 both show one Case Management service transaction but no other service to go with it. If the client received their initial intake and then no services were given beyond that, then that client should not be entered into HMIS at all. If the client did receive other services, then those services should be entered.

HOW TO CORRECT SERVICE TRANSACTION ISSUES:

Generally speaking, correcting service transactions will require different actions depending on the issue at hand. But there are some tips and tricks to making corrections that deal with Service Transactions and Entry/Exit dates that I want to cover in this Tip.

A common error to correct is adding missing Service Transactions (Case Management especially). Use your report to be sure you are dating your Service Transaction so that it falls *between* your Entry Date/Time and your Exit Date/Time. Please also keep in mind that when adjusting any dates/times in order to keep your Services between your Entry/Exits that you cannot edit a Service Transaction's Start Date or End Date. So in order to adjust your date/times, you will have to edit the Entry/Exit date/times instead. It is an anomaly in ServicePoint. Also, when you are adding missing service transactions, don't forget to check all the household members.

How Creating Services and Entry/Exits Differs from Deleting Services and Entry/Exits.

Service Transactions are similar to Entry/Exits in that whether you are creating or editing them, they save across the entire household. When you check the household members, as shown in Figure 7, you save that transaction (whether it's an Entry/Exit or a Service Transaction) to the client you are entering plus the household members. This feature of ServicePoint allows you to create your services and entry/exits once per household instead of having to go to each household member to do the same thing.

Household members

To include household members in these services, click on the box beside each name. Note: Only members from the same household may be selected.

Household #1 Members:

Kohn, Alfie

Figure 7: At the top of any Service Transaction or Entry/Exit, you see this section.

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The consequence of the way this is done is that many people assume that because you create an Entry/Exit or a Service Transaction once per household, that deleting a Service Transaction or an Entry/Exit for an entire household should only require one action as well. *Deleting Service Transactions and Entry/Exits for a household must be done individually.*

Deleting Entry/Exits:

The correct way to delete an Entry/Exit for all household members is to go to one of the household members with an erroneous Entry/Exit, click the trash can, close that window, then click on the next member of the household, go to their Entry Exit screen and delete the erroneous record there, then keep in that loop until all erroneous Entry/Exits have been deleted.

Deleting Service Transactions: Delete the Need not the Service

All of the above is true of Service Transactions, but with an added twist. For every Service Transaction you save, the database creates a "Need" in the background. Up until recently, I have always stated that there is usually no need to look at Needs or edit them or delete them, but in this case, there is a reason to see them. Let's look at how the Services and Needs can be found in ServicePoint. In Figure 8, you can see how it looks to see your Services listed. This is how the Service Transactions tab looks after you have clicked "Display Services". This is the way I tell people to view their services most the time.

Need Date	Service Start Date	Service End Date	HPRP Housing Relocation & Stabilization Service	HPRP Financial Assistance Type
02/04/2011	02/04/2011	02/04/2011		Utility payments
02/04/2011	02/04/2011	02/04/2011		Rental assistance
02/04/2011	02/04/2011	02/04/2011	Case management	

Figure 8: Display Services. Notice there is no "Display Services" button shown, because you are already viewing the Services. As you click on these buttons, they toggle according to what view you are in.

In order to see the Needs that were created in the background by the database when you saved these services, you would click the "Display All" button. (Figure 9.)

Transaction Type	Date	Provider	Type	Need Status	Need Outcome
Need	02/04/2011	Ohio Department of Development	Basic Needs	Closed	Fully Met
Service	02/04/2011	Ohio Department of Development	Basic Needs		
Need	02/04/2011	Ohio Department of Development	Basic Needs	Closed	Fully Met
Service	02/04/2011	Ohio Department of Development	Basic Needs		
Need	02/04/2011	Ohio Department of Development	Basic Needs	Closed	Fully Met
Service	02/04/2011	Ohio Department of Development	Basic Needs		

Figure 9: Display All. Notice now there's no "Display All" button shown, because you are viewing the Services and the Needs.

So why are the Needs suddenly important??? Well, because if you delete a Service, the Need will stay there, messing things up. *So the way to delete a particular Service is to delete the associated Need.* Doing so will automatically delete the Service attached to it. So if you wanted to delete the Rental Assistance service, you would look at Display Services (Figure 8) and see that it is the second service listed. You would then look at Display All (Figure 9) and delete the second "Need" by clicking the trash can next to it. You would then click each household member in turn and delete the need for each client in order to delete a Service Transaction for an entire household. Once you are in the Display All view, it goes fast, clicking from household member, delete, then to the next household member, delete, etc.

Making these corrections will be crucial to our next Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) to HUD. Genelle will be sending your Service Transactions by Household Report out soon with a general overview of how yours is looking.

Comments, questions, and feedback are welcome. If you would like to not receive "HPRP HMIS Topic of the Week" anymore, or would like to be included, please email genelledenzin@cohhio.org.