Jason Berlow: Good afternoon. I hope you all received the link to the slides this morning. We linked all the important reference information in this training there also. And it is also all linked in here. Erin Olson, who will be presenting, loves these memes and I do too. Hopefully, you have seen Napolean Dynamite. It is a great movie from the early 2000’s. It is the end of the fiscal year at VA. I guess you could say things are getting pretty serious. And they are. But we want to have some levity.

Today, this is how we are going to break things up. Section one, Tony is going to present to help you understand the requirements of the prior year and current year closeout. Most of this information is not going to really be new to you. Because it is a lot of information that is covered AL Conference and the monthly finance training in May. And then also in the memo that we sent out about closing the year, which is linked in here for you to locate. Then Kari is going to talk about how we look at the SOA to support the two percent target. In our experience, we always come to you from already financed and say you need to do this. Then Kari kind of approaches it from a field perspective of how you do this. That is what we are going to do.

Then Erin is going to talk about credit cards and travel cards. And then I will talk about the reimburseables and some of those key dates. Because there are a couple of key dates in there that you really need to know. And then we will talk about what to expect in FY 24. And if you are really eager to know, it is a CR. We will talk about that.

Before Tony starts, I just want to point out one more thing. The way we put these trainings together is we provide… we put all the relevant closeout documents on our SharePoint. Because I know we email them to you too. But I think getting a series of emails is always hard. I know I get a lot of emails and it is overwhelming. We have put them on all on our SharePoint so you could find them all in one place. But what this training does is it does consolidate all the key information you want to know. But I would highly recommend that you read both the annual close and the VHA Finance Comprehensive End of Year Guidance, which also contains information on reimbursable activity, which is a very popular topic where we need to make sure you that you are aware. Those key cutoff dates are really important.

Again, we just want to flag the SharePoint site. We have sent messages. This is kind of how we are feeling right now, very, very upset. Kari has been consoling me because we are not seeing a lot of usage. And the surveys have really pointed out that there is a real desire for training. We are trying to deliver on that. We are going to be working more to provide more training in FY 24 that is going to help manage individual accounts. That is an area in your surveys you reported. Thanks for filling out those surveys earlier in August.

But our resources are really not getting used the way we would like. We want to work with you to try to understand why they are not getting used and how we can make things better with the organization and such. If you have any feedback on SharePoint, please let us know. But we are going to be working on that more in FY 24. Because just like you, we are very busy with the FY 24 closeout and all the other things we are working on here. That being said, we are going to Mr. Laracuente’s section. Oh, too fast. All right. Tony?

Antonio Laracuente: Thank you, Jason. Good afternoon, everybody. Just to go back to Napolean Dynamite, I will vote for Jason and not Pedro this year. Just a couple of thoughts before we get going. The SharePoint site was really something that was set up really at the request of some of the field people. They wanted to have a consolidated place to have the information necessary to do their jobs. I do think that Jason’s point about having 707 views is really important. We rely on you all to go to these websites, to the fine print tools, to things like SharePoint to go get the answers. Jason is probably one of the busiest guys that I know. And while he takes time out to answer a lot of questions, I do think that many of these are already incorporated in SharePoint for you to go get access to it. Next slide, Jason, please.

Let us talk a little bit about closing the year and the expectations on the appropriated funds. I cannot emphasize enough. We have been saying this since we started the trainings in 2021. Do not let funds expire. This looks really bad on ORD and is subject to unintended consequences. Meaning that we could have rescissions out of this. We could have money pulled back. We could get congressions on it. VHA Finance looks at this. And then has to ask Matt Verna, hey; why did this happen? We want to make sure that all the prior year money ’22 – ’23 money is spent down to as close to zero as possible.

Jason Berlow: It is also reported in budget submissions to Congress.

Antonio Laracuente: Yes, what a voice. Yes. It is also recorded in the budget submission meaning that the OMB and Congress have visibility on this. We have talked about spending down the money. We still have 3.1 million dollars out there, which is a little bit surprising considering that Jason’s group has spent a lot of effort trying to let you all know we want you to spend down the prior year money. Now, we start thinking about sweeping money, why sweeps are occurring and so forth are going to occur. And it is because we cannot spend down our money. Really, if you look at it, it is not only the 3.1 million. But it is also the 4.3 million that is sitting in 0161R1, which is reimbursable funds. That means that people have not closed the loop. We have really got to get into it. This is ’22 – ’23 reimbursable money. It is still out there. In total, 7.4 million dollars going into the last month of the year. Definitely not where ORD wants to be.

Recall that ORD Finance made a decision that at the end of this year, the few last funds, those will be taken away dollar for dollar from your Call Center 101 FY 24 allocation. Current year money, ’23 –’24, we talked about the target of two percent. There is a rationale for that target. I know people are not happy about it. But we have got to get it down to two percent. We communicated this at the AO conference. Remember that it is by program. You could be at five percent in 8/21, at ten percent in 8/22, at negative three percent in 8/24, and so forth. But every program has to be down to two percent. It is not just the bottom line. Make sure that you are managing by program and not by the bottom-line overall appropriation.

FY 23 purchase cards… oh, by the way, we will look at the program on 10/1. But the pull will not happen until after October 23rd when the payroll hits and the accruals reverse. FY 23 purchase card orders, things that you put in right now that are not received, remember, those purchase card orders are not obligated in FMS. Those purchase card orders are not obligated in FMS. They are committed in IFCAP, but not obligated in FMS. If you cannot reconcile those by 10/15, you really should move those orders to FY 24 funding. Anything that is out there that still has not been reconciled really should be moved to FY 24 funding.

ORD will be working closely with the services and the stations to pull funds back by program. I know that several of the budget analysts in ORD have been contacting the stations asking them for plans, asking them for where the potential stumbling blocks are, and so forth. Keep communicating with them. Next slide, please.

Some key dates: 9/1/2023, do not enter anymore bills or collect funds that impact 22/23 or 23/24. Because if you enter those bills and they are collected in September, you have a high likelihood of never seeing that money again. I know one station went through that last year. It took almost an act of Jason Berlow Congress to get that money back. I do not even know if that money ever even got back. But it is back. It is a risk.

Jason Berlow: No, we did not get it.

Antonio Laracuente: Okay. It is a risk. That money will end up somewhere else. And it is not accessible. For TDAs, you should get all your TDAs by then except for the August reimburseables are probably going to come in sometime in September. But make sure you have got all your TDAs lined up, checked your ACS report, check your RAP report, balance it up against your ceilings in FMS to make sure that everything is balanced up and you have gotten everything that you are supposed to have gotten. On 9/27, you are going to see some charge card systems will record the obligations and expenditures for the billings in FMS. These transactions will include invoice billings and so forth. What it really means is that really on September 25th, things will probably shut down for the rest of the year. But you want to make sure that all your commitments are obligated. Remember, commitments are not obligations. Your 1358s are obligated, 2237s are obligated. I know that some of the contracting people go out to the last day of their year. They are working hard to try to get those obligations. But if you see a contract that has not hit FMS or your F20, make sure that you are communicating with your fiscal. They are going to have to make sure that that contract gets obligated in that fiscal year. Then of course, on 10/23, the beginning of the prior year pullbacks. Next slide, please.

Key points to remember on the appropriation. Again, we talked about being zero. Obligate everything by 9/30. One thing to note is that last prior year funds result in dollar reductions. That is really important to remember. Do not let those funds lapse. We talked a little bit about the rest of this stuff. Let us go to the next slide.

For 23-24, the two percent carryover. Make sure that you are talking to your investigators. Make sure you are talking to your investigators. These rescissions are real. Seveny-five million dollars, if you take an average of one hundred – two hundred thousand dollars for a merit review, that tells you how many merit reviews are impacted. Always consider funding as one year funding. Reinforce this with your investigators early and often.

To meet the two percent target, execute those contracts or 1358s. Try to get your expense transfers done as soon as possible. I have talked to several of you whose stations are doing expense transfers at the end of the year. That really is tough. You really should be doing them throughout the year. Again, we are late in the year. But let us try to get those done before 9/15.

We are closely monitoring the execution. Mr. Berlow has been looking at your status of allowances to see how things are running. And then tracking the current year funding. And then over the next five weeks, we are actively contracting with fiscal to obligate/finalize contracting activities. If you need to send money back, do so now. Do not wait. If you need to send money back, do so now. Contact the appropriate budget analyst in the ORD service. Next slide, please.

Okay. Just a little bit of follow up from the Q3 RAFT report. The data was all over the place. The data was all over the place. I can tell you that I am just being transparent with you guys. There are things like your RCS money was already spent even though you have the RCS salaries for the whole year. The trust in the data is not quite there yet. It did not correlate well to your FMS data set allowance. We overspent by over 60 million dollars I think was the number. Last year was 20 million dollars. I think that there is a reason for doing this. I think as we get closer to the end of the year and going into next year, you will see why that data are important. PMOs, there are a lot of PMOs being done right now that should have been done back in April or May. But I think that these are the kinds of things that we want to avoid going into next year. We want FY 24 to be a lot smoother than FY 23 has been.

It is evident that project management is difficult. You guys have told us that in your survey. I think Mr. Berlow is going to be looking at that survey very carefully and really looking at the needs for future training. We have to find ways to track project spending and project management a little bit better. The Cost Center 101 Expenditure Report revealed little correlation to the purpose of the allocation. This was SharePoint or the survey we did. I will tell you that some people, good for you, spent three times as much money that you got in 101 when you added up all the numbers. Some people did not spend anything. Again, it is not that we are trying to micromanage you. But there is an intent at the bigger level, at the enterprise level. Because if we can do some cost savings here, we can provide more money for projects. We can definitely do more projects with any money that is saved. At the bottom is a little bit of an example of what we are thinking about for the end of the year. Just making sure that we focus on the programs, focus on the appropriation, then the programs, and then the projects. Next slide. I think I am turning this over now to Kari.

Oh, one more thing about the closeout. Just review your outstanding obligations. We are really looking at the UDO reports. There is a lot of money out there. There is a lot of money in 21-22 that is still obligated that has substantial balances in their obligation. Those are monies that may or could have been used for something else. A lot of these are 1358s or IPAs and subject reimbursements. I do know about the IPA outlived the problem where the university does not bill timely. But again, those are large obligations that are open that could potentially be closed before the end of the fiscal year and used for something else. Think about that. We are not telling you to do it. But just think about it. I will say though, and we did have one station that had a very large 1358 that just happened to be obligated or had a very large obligation that happened to be obligated in October and it did not look very good. Because that money was untouchable in the following year. Just remember those are little things that, again, if we have some money savings, we can help other programs out in the system going into FY 24. Now, I think I will turn it over to Kari.

Kari Points: Thank you, Tony. I will talk about from a field perspective how we can look at targeting our two percent carryover. This side is so critical to really understand the difference when committed and when an item is obligated. You may already be thinking that you are good to go. You have reached your two percent carryover because you have entered all your 2237s for equipment, your 1358s for IPAs, you have placed your credit card orders, and you are good to go. However, these items have not… just taking an action into the funding in Vista is not obligating your funds. You have committed them to that transaction. Funds hit the fund control point on the FMS side when they are obligated by Fiscal. For a 2237 contract committed when you enter the 2237, it is obligated when contract is complete and signed. For the 1358 for IPAs, you have entered the IPA, it has been approved. It has been sent to Fiscal. Until Fiscal completes that obligation, it is sitting in committed. Once Fiscal does their thing, it becomes obligated and you are good.

For credit cards, this is really critical. When they place the credit card order, it is committed. It is not obligated and showing up in FMS until the order has been reconciled. If you are placing orders all this month and the shipping dates are eight weeks for now, you are in trouble for those orders. Because they are committed. But they are not going to be obligated by September 30th. Really look at your transactions and look at your status of allowance. On the FMS side, that is what you are obligated. If you have a whole bunch of stuff in AFCAT [PH] pending, those are committed. And those are counting towards your carryover. Because it does not come over until the item is officially obligated. Really understand the difference between committed and obligated for all these transactions. Next slide, please.

Now we need to get to two percent. How do we calculate where we are at? The example in this slide presentation is based on the overall appropriation. It says you should do this. But you actually do need to do this for each individual program. Because they are looking at two percent now by program, not by just your overall appropriation. We are tracking it by program here and then the overall appropriation making sure that everything is under the two percent target. But in this example, we are just looking at one big picture here.

The total from the SOA, funds we have received into 161A1 is 14.3 million. What is two percent of that? Two hundred eight six thousand, that is our target. That is what we need to focus on is getting down to that dollar amount and making sure everything is obligated up to that point. Anything over that is going to be swept in October. Next slide, please.

First, you want to start with salaries and projecting those out. You have what your FMS budget is, what you have received for salaries for each of your salary fund control points. You have the amount that has been obligated so far as the payrolls have hit. Then you got to project out. We know that pay periods 17, 18, and 19 need to hit yet, plus your accruals. Pay period 20 is not going to hit until October. But you are going to have accruals hit. These are at .5. If you look at a pay calendar, the last week of September is going to hit this fiscal year. The first week of October will hit next. The pay period is going to be split exactly into two. You are going to calculate half of what your pay periods have been. In this example, after you take out 17, 18, 19, and the accruals, you are remaining with 190 thousand dollars. As each pay period hits, you are going to change your obligated amount in that second row and then remove the projection. You are only going to be left with what your actual is as this moves forward. Next slide, please.

For your all others, we have set up two different types of columns. You have what is obligated, which is your all other current status. I have your FMS budget up there, your FMS obligated as of… that says 8/15. But it would be as of today. And then your remaining amounts. Then on the other side of the spreadsheet is okay, but what have I committed. What do I know I have money set aside for? What do I need to work on making sure it is obligated by September 30th. In this example, you have your pending credit card orders, your pending contracts, and your pending IPAs waiting for Fiscal to be obligated. Right now, you are showing 2.2 million remaining. If ORD Finance looked at my SOA, they would be like wow, you have 2.2 million. Kari, what are you doing?

Well, on the other side, I know that I have all of these actions committed. But they cannot see that. However, it only matters if I can get all of these items obligated by September 30th. That is the goal. And that is what we are working on towards here. That is a lot of money sitting over there that is committed and not obligated. Just constantly working and making sure your purchase cards are reconciled. I just had a meeting earlier with our purchasing technicians making sure they understood that they need to get items reconciled. I went through this whole process with them. Everyone is understanding of how we are going to get to two percent as a group together. What contracts? Are there going to be any that are not going to be completed? What is contracting saying? Are there IPAs that are sitting with Fiscal that we need to give them a nudge to obligate? Those are the types of things we need to be working on.

One of the points here too is that an invoice does not need to be submitted into IPS for an item to be obligated. I just want to make sure that is clear. Once you have obligated the 1358 or 2237, it moves into the obligated side of the SOA. It is no longer pending. It does not count towards your two percent. You do not need to be scrambling to get the invoices. You do want to be getting invoices to clear out your UDOs. But you do not need to be doing it for the purpose of the two percent. Next slide, please.

Here is everything wrapped up. Now you have figured out your salary. You have figured out your all other. Right now, if no other items are obligated and we just stay still, we are at 16.8 percent. Not good. However, you have all the pending obligations. Everything gets completed. We are at 1.9 percent. I share this with the team. I am like okay. How are we going to make sure that everything under our committed is processed into obligations so that we can make sure we are under two percent? If there is going to be an issue, we need to know now so that we can be working through that. It is really, really important to be working with Fiscal, Contracting, and all of your purchase card technicians informing them of this.

I pulled up our spreadsheet today in our staff meeting. I am like this is what it looks like. This is where we are at. Here is what our target needs to be. What issues do we perceive? Because we cannot sit there at 16.8 percent. That is a lot of money that would be lost here when they pull in October. Next slide, please.

Here is another example of how it is all rolled up. You want to do this for every single program and really have eyes on where you are at with everything so that you can make sure you hit that two percent carryover. It is doable. You can track it through here. But it takes effort to put this all together and really work with everyone to understand where you are at and how you are going to achieve that goal. Again, do this for every single program and then roll it up to your all over, your whole appropriation for research. Next slide.

Now a summary again. We have gone over this. But again, again, again, credit card charges that are not reconciled. It is best practice to stop all credit card charges at the end of August. Our cutoff here in Iowa City was actually last Friday. Then the purchase card technicians have until this Friday to enter all the orders. They know to make me aware of anything that looks like it is going to have a long shift date. Because I know then that those are not going to be able to get reconciled. Really, the month of September allows them to focus on receiving orders in and reconciling as much as possible. So, this will reduce the amount of credit card orders in your carryovers into FY 24. Once FY 24 starts, it is critical that you switch and use your FY 24-25 funds for credit card orders. No prior year funds should be used for credit card charges.

This comes up a lot. People say well my fiscal will not let me use. We are on a continued resolution. I cannot use my FY 24-25 funds for credit card orders. Work with your fiscal. There has been guidance that has been sent out for this. In a continued resolution, you operate as normal for these types of items. And you can use those credit cards. Do not use your prior year funds for credit card charges. If you run into problems with that, contact ORD Finance about any issues that you are having. Because it is really imperative that you do not use those prior year funds. Again, work with your fiscal and contracting on all your IPAs and contracts that have not been obligated. Next slide, please. All right. I think I can turn it over to Erin now.

Erin Olson: Yes. Thank you, Kari. Here is Homer Simpson with Ned Flander’s purchase card. Next slide. Here are some more tips. I know we will continue to discuss the credit cards and those charges. But as Kari mentioned, it is best practice to stop all the charges by the end of August. Make sure your PIs know well in advance. The other thing to mention is that for us, we have to get an increase in our monthly purchase limit. Because the PIs know that they need to get enough reagents and supplies to tide them through October. They are going to be buying more stuff. You have to be mindful of your single purchase limit and your monthly purchase limit. Consider that. By doing so, by cutting off your orders by the end of August, that gives you all of September. Again, the over commits are going to be turned on in September. Even under a CR, you are going to want to use your current year funds. You are not going to use any prior year funds for your credit card orders.

If there are delays, and still there are some delays with product being available from lingering COVID impacts. If there are shipping delays, if there is any reason why these credit card orders are not going to be reconciled. And this states November 1st, but really mid-October. You need to cancel that order and put it in again as an FY 24-25 order. Because we are going to be sweeping the prior year fund mid-October.

There are different ways that you can obtain your credit card open orders. You can request the report, the accrual report from your fiscal office. You can do a running balance report in Vista. And anything with the at sign next to that order is going to be an open order, so unreconciled. You can ask your… put in an e-pass to get the unreconciled menu added so that you can run the unreconciled report by cardholder. Then you can pull and see all the open orders by cardholder if you have more than one. Work with your cardholders to see what can be reconciled and what needs to be canceled and reordered next year. Next slide.

Travel and concur. I know this link says FY 2021. But it is actually the fiscal year 2023 Newsflash. Concur is going to be unavailable between Friday, September 5th and Monday, September 18th for the 2024 FMS lines of accounting to be uploaded. During that timeframe while Concur is down, emergency travel procedures are in effect. You need to pay attention and get some more details from this newsflash if this impacts you. If you have got travel starting this fiscal year that crosses over into next fiscal year, you need to look at the job aid that is linked here to understand how to process this document. Any travel that is ending before the first day of FY 24 or travel on multi-year lines of accounting is not affected. And that is… no, I have got one more. Next slide, please.

Let me see. This is just more guidance for the travel that occurs in FY 2024. Do not create anything after Monday, September 18th. Next slide. All right. Over to Jason.

Jason Berlow: Thanks, Erin. FY 21, that was my mistake. I was working through the past. I know everybody likes reimburseables. I will just flag that the March training is linked on our SharePoint. It is very helpful when you are trying to ascertain if your collections… but if you do have questions, please reach out. I helped the station today. Sometimes it can be confusing, and I will be there helping to answer their questions. Please reach out. But also, the training, we want to teach you to fish so if we are not available, you are able to find information. Again, here is the training link. You can click here and look at it and watch it. The video recording is there too if you want to hear our lovely voices again. You can listen to it 24/7.

Just remember reimburseables are made of these offset expenditures made in the 0161A1 appropriation for extended training for university affiliates, NPCs, or any affiliates or if we are doing something for the medical center. Remember, it is just a short-term solution. Once you do the bill of collection and get the money back, then you are supposed to do a top transfer to move these funds up. We are seeing honestly the card transfers are not occurring because we see very large balances in certain areas. I have the balances in the next slide or one of the next slides. I will show you. And the problem is it can be a \_\_\_\_\_ [00:31:57] the balances are growing in fiscal offset expenditures in previous years for the bill. This is making us lose our buying power. Again, like I said, if it is 22-23 and the balance is there, you have an unobligated balance. Once we get to October 1st, it is gone. The money is of no use to us. It will go back to the treasury in five years. You will not have your reimbursement.

Here is one example. A bill was made. The bill was paid. CDA received it in June ’22 for X2. The costs were incurred in 21-22 funds. Cost expenditure is now done in 0161R1 or X2. Yeah, you get that balance down. But then you have a balance in 0161A1 21-22, which their account still exists. And as you can see in our report called SF133, which maybe I will show you all one day, but it is available. And it is just sitting here. We are having higher recoveries and obligations and such just so it goes back to treasury one day, which is all good. It is all good that the funds go back to treasury, and they are not just lost. But they are lost to us. Make sure you close your loop and keep track of that. Because of the period of availability of the funds is very important.

Now working with fiscal to cost transfer that 23-24 to reduce that R1 balance so that you get your balance up for obligated just at that two percent so that we do not pull it later. Yeah, get to that two percent in obligate it now so that we do not pull it later.

Managing reimbursable funding, like we said, we have to know your account. We went on to VSC to check the balances yesterday. It should be pretty close to it today. We have 6.8 million dollars in 016NS2 [PH]. Tony might want to chime in here too. But these are for reimbursements from the MPC to us and are costs that occurred that the VA incurred. And we now need to be reimbursed. Like I said, the 0161A1 23-24. It should be cost transferred. Why is 6.8 million dollars sitting there? It does not look good. This information gets reported to Congress and is such. As soon as that fiscal years, the appropriations committees immediately send a request to the VA wanting to know what our obligated balances are by account. This information will be reported to our appropriation committees in early October. Cost transfer as much as possible now. We do not want this to matter here.

Prior 0161 22-23, now it is 4.3 million. We think a lot of it is IAA from one station that we are working with it and we are tracking it. But you want to track that and make sure that you understand the difference between the 22-23 and 23-24. If you are bringing in a reimbursement now, you really want to bring it in to 23-24 so you still can use it next year. Because if you take a reimbursement now for costs you incurred and it is taken in 22-23 and you do not cost transfer it by September 30th, there is nothing we can do in October. The period of availability has ended. Make sure you run those daily stats and funds are transferred prior to your balances starting on August 1st. If you have not started, start now. Maria keeps sending them out VSC. We check it. We use VSC too. Keep tracking and working through fiscal to get those cost transfers in.

Then the way you get these balances is when the TDAs are received through the reimbursement report that Raju Rama and VHA finance. We send these out every month. I think it is helpful. Because it is a monthly report and not an annual report. In our SharePoint, we have actually saved them all for you for the full fiscal year. If you go on there, you can look at them from September. August should be coming out shortly. The VHA Closeout Guidance says it should come out August 1st. But it might be a few days later. Make sure that you track that. Then in 23-24, we see 2.8 million dollars in balances. Again, a little less concern because this money does carry over. But then again, this should be cost transferred. As soon as you get that TDA for the costs that are incurred, you need to cost transfer that funding to offset that balance to recover that cost. Make sure you do that.

Then with your fiscal, we want to run the CALT tables. That is all your reimbursable advances in there. This does not really apply to everyone. But typically, when we enter these agreements and we talked about this in the training from October, there are usually advanced collections, which is a different type of IAA agreement. Which means you collect all the money in advance. And then it is the MPC affiliates bills that get earned. We want to make sure to reflect all that money that is earned for closeout. Make sure you stay on top of that also. If you have any questions about that, please let us know. That is more of an accounting issue. You typically work with your fiscals on that and our good friend at OS [PH].

Everybody needs to do whatever you can do to save these dates. Make it your screensaver. Save it on your phone, desktop, and an Apple watch if you have one. And make it your background. Remove the pictures of your kids to see this. Because this is so important. This is where a lot of us get in trouble. This is all in the VHA Closeout Guidance. This is on our SharePoint. But we put it here for you. Around 9/1, the TBA for August will come out and will processing as these GLs or these 425F or 425G and 425B. Just keep in mind, this is not for advanced collection. Again, this only applies to a few of you if you have IAAs that are advanced collection. Those are a manual TDA that we do that John sends out and I help too. But we want to make sure we that TRFL screenshot and I have a message to see if those funds were earned.

Then on 9/11, there is going to be a disbursement of TDAs for reimbursement earned from 9/1 to 9/8. Then there is going to be a disbursement TDA on 9/18 from September 8th to the 15th. Then that is it. Any reimbursements earned after September 15th go into the National Reserve. These funds will be distributed to stations as having the basis. But that VHA Finance’s generic guidance for medical care funding. In FY 23, we really tried. We worked with one station in particular to try to get that funding. But we were not successful in the National Reserve. Really, you got to ensure that you are not earning anything after 9/15. I know that is problematic. Tony maybe or Kari, you want to chime in here because I know with the agent cashier, you are not supposed to hold checks. But do you want to talk about that Tony or Kari? Erin?

Antonio Laracuente: Well, I think what I would say is that is one of the reasons you want to plan your bills out and not collect. Not put bills in later in the year and not collect later in the year. And it is true. If the agent cashier receives it, they have to deposit it. Just be cognizant of when the bill is put in. And possibly contact the entity to make sure when the payment happens and so forth. Again, it all depends on when that agent cashier gets that bill.

Jason Berlow: Yes. Generally, if you get it in the first two weeks of September, you should be okay. But we cannot really guarantee anything. Generally, if you follow this timeline and provide this guidance to your MPC or your affiliate too. It is really important. And this guidance, from year to year, is pretty standard guidance of VHA Finance operates with the automatic TDA process. Because the reason it is automatic is because there are so many TDAs. It is not just research. It is all the appropriations. They did this manually with the massive workflow. If there are any questions, we can address those in the question section about that.

Okay. Finally, for FY 24, we will talk about this more in the coming weeks. We are not planning on having training in September because of the closeout. We did not have one in September last year. We know you are so busy. We want to give you a break. But we want to talk to you about what to expect for FY 24.

Here are some main considerations to start to ’24. Again, like we said before, do not place credit card orders with PY funds. Instead, use current year funds. Do not execute contracts or purchases with PY funds except sheep and lamb. And then cost transfer and obligate 1358s timely and regularly. And then meet earlier with your investigators to develop a spend plan. Schedule now if time permits. Pink sheets provide funds for FY 24. Again, we are going to work with you more to help manage individual costs. It is really a concern of ours. But Tony, Kari, and the rest of us at ORD finance are concerned about it. Next slide.

Okay. Plan to start FY 24 under a CR. Right now, Congress is on recess. Erin always gets it when I just say they are just having a vacation. She claims they work when they go back to their districts. And I know they do. Right now, leaders are hopefully getting ready to pursue a stop yet to avoid a shutdown. After the debt ceiling was passed, it did look more promising that a budget would be enacted by October 1st. But now there have been some more hiccups along the way. You can find it online and such. This is the last article from GovExec, which is the government website if you ever want to read it. They always have articles about the government. We really will not know much until they come back at the session in September, next week. But there are already some rumblings of a possible… you might have seen the talk of a shutdown. And I suspect that we will get close to that. It will take them to the end of the month to negotiate. You know it always comes down to the last few hours. Please be prepared for that.

We did issue CR guidance last year. We are going to be updating it. We just have not had time yet. But you are more welcome, and you should actually read last year’s CR guidance. It is going to be pretty much unchanged. We are just going to add a couple of more things, which I am going to mention here. But just so you are aware, because there is always a lot of confusion in VA about a CR. The rest of the medical care appropriations are not under a CR because they are advance appropriations or an annual appropriation. I do not really know the background. I would have to look back and ask somebody in my old office why ORD was not included or incorporated in the advance appropriation way back when, but we were not.

A CR is one annual appropriation acts are not enacted by the beginning of the fiscal year, October 1st. They used to be a lot less often and a lot shorter. But now, as we all know, they go longer. One or more continuing resolutions may be enacted, which might happen in FY 24 to provide a temporary funding to continue certain programs. Remember in FY 22… yeah, FY 22 we went to March. FY 23 went to December. Who knows? This means you have to execute. You need to obligate and spend your money on October 1st.

Now we always get questions, and we always get comments about fiscal shutdown. And there is not a shutdown. The thing is that it takes some time for VHA Finance to load all the funding in AACS for FY 24. And if you remember last year, the funds were not loaded into TDL to the field until probably early to mid-November. What we are going to do is we are going to provide you with a copy of all your TDAs so that you understand this is what you are going to get from the ITA. You understand it so you can show it to your fiscal. And we will put it in a memo too. Because there are a lot of concerns. The funds controls are lifted to allow a negative at that time. Because the appropriation is solvent at the appropriation level. You are just not seeing it at your program level. It is a little, I would say, cause of some distress when you are trying to obligate contracts, purchase cards, etcetera. But it is negative.

But just remember, I would have to check my bank account, but I think we all got paid like every other CR. Things are still hitting. It is just that the funds have not been loaded in the system to the TDA level yet. It takes VHA… there are a lot of requirements. They have to set the stem plant. It has to go to the VHA Resource Board. There is a lot that has to be done. We want to really stop the rumors and stop the talk of a fiscal shutdown and such. It is just that it just takes time to get the funds loaded. And the federal government, we spend a month or two closing the year. We spend a month or two opening the year. It is very labor intensive and bureaucratic. That is just what we operate on. There is no suspension on the use of purchase cards provided an appropriation continuous has been enacted. You have to use purchase cards. You have to buy stuff, right. Keep buying.

And like I said, you will not see your funding locally at the station. But funding is still available at the appropriation level. And we will communicate that to you. We will send it out to obligate payroll, purchase cards, contracts, etcetera. Now, if there is a lapse of appropriation, that is different. And we will provide guidance at the time. But we are really always plan and anticipate that will not happen. We will send out the report of FY 24 CR TDAs in order for you to understand your balances and be sure that you are not in the negative. Again, you have your pink sheets. Those are really important too. Let me see here. Okay. Now it is time for questions. I will stop sharing. And I will let Parker share or Brandon.

Parker Cunneen: Yes. Brandon will be bringing that up right now.

Jason Berlow: Tony or John, do you want to take that one?

Antonio Laracuente: I can take it. The question is how do we return funds back if we know we will not use all of CC01 funds? What you will do is send an email to Mr. Verlio \_\_\_\_\_ [00:47:25]. And he will pull the money. Please copy me on it as well, so an email to John Verlio with the amount of money and the state that is crossed on the 101. Thank you.

Jason Berlow: I think Kari and Erin were talking a little bit about that. Kari, do you want to talk about that?

Kari Points: Yes. Our deadline is August 25th for Iowa City. And knowing that there is going to be a mad dash to get orders in by that date and then the purchasing tags have a week. The goal is to have all of the purchases submitted by September 1st for us. Then go ahead, Erin.

Erin Olson: Yes, same. We are typically by the end of August. But we usually leave that last week. Then we do allow mouse orders, animal orders through mid-September. But those can be reconciled very quickly and easily. That is our one exception.

Antonio Laracuente: I can say that a lot of stations, a lot of fiscal services have their own internal deadlines. You should work with those. But you should leave open at least a little bit for what Erin said, purchases of animals or purchases of emergency supplies, things that expire, and so forth… quickly expire. But it is usually the end of August.

Kari Points: We just an approval process that if you do not meet the date that you have to basically send an emergency request to me and I will approve it or not approve it based on the reasoning behind it, and when the shipping and all that stuff will be expected.

Antonio Laracuente: Yes, this is really interesting issue, which is the issue of \_\_\_\_\_ [00:49:44] and ER for equipment that really has delayed a lot of the orders at certain sites. I did put a call out. And I only received responses for a few sites regarding delays on that. But I would assume this is one of those sites. But again, it is one of those things where you are right. It is going to be problematic getting equipment bought for under ten thousand dollars with a purchase card. And it is not going to be delivered until October. There will be some leniency on that. But just again, this is one of those issues where 80 percent – 90 percent goal is to try not to have so much carryover on credit card accruals and so forth.

Jason Berlow: Are there any more questions?

Parker Cunneen: That is all the questions we had at the moment.

Jason Berlow: We can wait a second to see if there is anymore before we stop. I saw somebody had their hand up. But maybe that was the question that was asked. But I guess if there are not any more questions… if you are already in the middle of a question, just send it to us. I guess we are good. Are you good, Tony, Kari, Erin?

Kari Points: Yes.

Erin Olson: Yes.

Antonio Laracuente: Thank you, everyone.

Erin Olson: Thanks, everyone.

Jason Berlow: Just a reminder to everyone too. If something pops into your head in the next couple of minutes, there is a chance on the survey as well to put in any missing questions. But I hope everyone has a good afternoon.

Parker Cunneen: Thank you, everyone. Good luck closing FY 24… 23; sorry. Good bye.