

Post Hearing Questions for Mr. Macies (UNISYS)
Hearing on the Department of Veterans' Affairs IT programs
July 21, 2004

Before the
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations 335 Cannon House Office
Building

1. How will Unisys track all its milestones?

Unisys tracks all its milestones in the Project Management Plan (PMP) using Primavera's Team Play. All key detailed tasks required to complete the PFSS Pilot have been identified in the PMP and input in to Teamplay. This detailed plan includes tasks that are generally no more than 5 days in duration to assist with the tracking of performance. The tasks roll up to specified deliverables, which in turn rolls up to milestones. Unisys captures actual time and performance against plan on a weekly basis. Unisys and OI compare their respective plans for touch points (dependencies) on a weekly basis to make sure the plans are in sync and that the planned progress has been achieved. Tracking status on a weekly basis ensures early identification of any risks and enables quick implementation of corrective actions. Unisys and OI planners meet the first week of every month on site in Cleveland to review the accomplishments against plan in detail. The planners generate monthly performance reports for both the Unisys portion and the OI portion. The two individual plans are also combined for reporting. A monthly status report is generated for the VA senior executives and presented on the second Tuesday of each month. Changes to the plan baseline must be approved by Unisys, OI, CBO and VISN 10. Any major changes (schedule, cost, resources) must be escalated to Ken Ruyle for review and approval.

2. What happens if PFSS does not pass its end user tests?

During the current Design Phase (July –December), users will participate in developing the Use Cases that define the functionality and process flows of the "to be" PFSS. Once the Design of PFSS is completed and approved by the users, the system is built to those specifications. Unisys will then perform functional and integration testing. Once Unisys is satisfied that the system is performing to specifications and is integrated with the Legacy VistA system, the end user test will be conducted. The end users will test PFSS against the Use Cases they defined during the Design Phase. The end users will test for the completeness of

functionality, process flow, and integration. If PFSS does not pass any aspect of end user testing, the system will be corrected until it passes. PFSS will not be implemented until the system passes end user testing and acceptance.

3. What delays and costs will be incurred if PFSS does not meet its milestones?

Unisys is operating under a Firm Fixed Price contract. As a result, costs associated with Unisys not meeting our milestones would be absorbed by Unisys. OI costs associated with not meeting milestones would need to be absorbed by the VA. The project plan does include some flexibility to allow for unexpected delays while still meeting overall project milestones. The team is tracking progress against plan on a weekly basis. Deviations from the plan are evaluated and an impact analysis are performed. The impact analysis examines schedule, resources, and costs. The project status and any changes to the baseline plan are reported monthly to VA senior executives.

To avoid delays and additional cost, Unisys is continually evaluating risks and communicating any concerns directly to Ken Ruyle, PFSS Program Manager, who is responsible for all PFSS personnel, resources and performance. Unisys is working closely with Mr. Ruyle and the entire project team to identify and address all risks, including those for which both Unisys and VA are accountable.

4. How confident is Unisys that the commercial off the shelf programs will meet the VA's needs in the future?

Unisys is very confident that the commercial off the shelf software (COTS) will meet the VA's needs now and in the future. During the Analysis Phase Unisys along with VISN 10 developed the "as is" and "to be" functionality and flows for PFSS. This analysis and the demonstrations during COTS selection, validated that the IDX product very closely meets the VA needs. Furthermore the VA wants to adopt commercial best practices for the revenue cycle. As the third party requirements for submitting invoices change over time, the COTS product will continue to evolve to be viable in the commercial market place. The VA will continue to benefit from the investment in the COTS software that the vendor makes to keep up with industry best practices. One of the key design goals of the selected COTS product is to have industry standard HL-7 interfaces. By having an industry standard interface, the COTS product will not require changes as VistA evolves.