

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF THE
MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION
PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE FOR
MARYLAND NURSING HOME EXPERIENCE OF CARE SURVEYS
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Maryland Healthcare Commission
4160 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

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Present:

On Behalf of MHCC:

Andrea Allen, Procurement Officer
Theressa Lee, Director, Center for Quality Measurement
Julie Deppe, Administrative Officer, Center for Quality
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Vendors:

Jamie Choe, Enalogic
Chris Choe, Enalogic
JoAnne Baick, Enalogic
David Kiasi, Application Alternatives
Pamela Giambo, Westat
Janet Sutton, Westat
Leeann Steuer, Britt's Industries, Inc.
Allison Booker, WBA Research
Elizabeth Britt, Britt's Industries, Inc.
Alice Middleton, The Hilltop Institute
Brian Ackerman, Ascendient Healthcare Advisors
Leanne Clark-Shirley, IMPAQ International, LLC
Amy L. Djangali, IMPAQ International, LLC
Anna Sommers, RTI International
Olu Hassan, Korak
Jo Anne Schneider, Chrysalis Collaborations
Rachel Hunt, Ava Consulting
Allison Wurzel, Eureka Facts
Herbert Thompson, KEN Consulting
William Wells, Schaeffer Center

Via Teleconference:

Lois Olinger, Westat
David Bradley, Westat
Brian Robertson, Market Decisions Research
Jennifer Oliver, Market Decisions Research

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1 MS. ALLEN: Good morning, everyone and thank you for
2 joining us this morning.

3 This pre-proposal meeting is in regards to the release
4 RFP, "Maryland Nursing Home Experience of Care Surveys." So,
5 thank you for coming.

6 And we will start off by introducing ourselves. My
7 name is Andrea Allen. I'm the Procurement Officer for the
8 Maryland Health Care Commission. Theresa?

9 MS. LEE: I'm Theresa Lee, Director for the Center
10 for Quality Measurement and Reporting. Welcome, everyone.

11 MS. J. CHOE: I'm Jamie. I'm from Enalogic. I'm the
12 VP of Operation.

13 MS. C. CHOE: Good morning, everyone. My name is
14 Chris Choe and I represent Enalogic, LLC based in Rockville,
15 Maryland. And we are a veteran-owned small business. And I
16 just wanted to meet everyone today and we do bring some very
17 unique capabilities for this project. And, I have someone here
18 today who has years of nursing home care experience. So, she
19 really knows how to speak with the residents and the family
20 members as well. And she has also served the Census Bureau as
21 a numerator. So, we really bring something unique to the

1 table.

2 And also we -- our core competency include research
3 and consulting and some of our clients include the Department
4 of Navy and Office of Legal Research. Thank you.

5 MS. BAICK: Hello, my name is JoAnne Baick. I'm with
6 Enalogic, and I'm Program Director. Thank you.

7 MR. KIASI: David Kiasi of Applications Alternatives.
8 We have experience in IT support for opinion surveys, and we
9 are looking to sub to prime bidders.

10 MS. GIAMBO: Pamela Giambo from Westat. We are a
11 large research survey firm. We do a lot of work with federal
12 agencies, state agencies, local agencies. And I am a Survey
13 Methodologist.

14 MS. LEE: Before you continue, could you all press --
15 there is a little button that will make this light turn green -
16 -

17 MS. GIAMBO: Oh, thank you.

18 MS. LEE: -- when you're ready to speak. There you
19 go.

20 [Laughter].

21 MS. SUTTON: I'm Janet Sutton, and I'm also with

1 Westat.

2 MS. STEUER: Leeann Steuer. I'm with Britt's
3 Industries. We are a WBE, SBR.

4 MS. BOOKER: Allison Booker with WBA Research. We are
5 a full-service research firm, and we are also an MBE.

6 MS. BRITT: Hi, I'm Elizabeth Britt from Britt's
7 Industries. We are an MBE commercial printing company. And
8 there was a lot of printing opportunities on this job, so I
9 just wanted to come here and meet everybody. Thank you.

10 MS. MIDDLETON: Hi, I'm Allison Middleton from the
11 Hilltop Institute at UMBC.

12 MS. ACKERMAN: Brian Ackerman. I am a Principal with
13 Ascendent Healthcare Advisors.

14 MS. CLARK-SHIRLEY: LeAnn Clark-Shirley, Gerontologist
15 and Senior Research Associate at IMPAQ International.

16 MS. DJANGALI: I'm Amy Djangali. I'm a Survey
17 Methodologist and a Research Associate at IMPAQ International.

18 MS. SOMMERS: It looks like it is already pushed.
19 Anna Sommers with RTI International.

20 MS. DEPPE: I am Julie Deppe, and I work in the Center
21 for Quality Measurement.

1 MR. HASSAN: Olu Hassan from Korak Healthsource Group.
2 And, my company is an MBE -- certified by MDOT, and based out
3 of Baltimore. We specialize in support services. I knew that
4 there was going to be an opportunity at this engagement for my
5 company to be at least utilized in our area. So, we do support
6 for any organization in the health care industry.

7 MS. LEE: And, for the person who just arrived if we
8 could --

9 MS. SCHNEIDER: -- I am Jo Anne Schneider. I am
10 sorry. I have been driving around for 15 minutes.

11 MS. LEE: I'm so sorry.

12 MS. SCHNEIDER: Chrysalis Collaborations. We are a
13 small, women and person with disability-owned firm, and MBE,
14 DBE in Maryland. And we have been doing this kind of research
15 for about 30 years or so, although not under this entity.

16 MS. LEE: And, I believe you are collecting business
17 cards --

18 MS. ALLEN: Yes, I am.

19 MS. SCHNEIDER: Yes.

20 MS. LEE: -- for the stenographer.

21 MS. SCHNEIDER: And, we are looking to be a sub.

1 MS. LEE: So, if anyone has not turned in their
2 business card.

3 MS. ALLEN: Yes. So, we'll let Theresa go over the
4 RFP, just a small -- short summary.

5 MS. LEE: Okay. "The Maryland Health Care Commission
6 has issued this Request for Proposals to obtain a Contractor
7 with consumer health care survey administration experience" to
8 be responsible for the administration and management of our
9 nursing home experience of care survey. The contractor will
10 also be responsible for the analysis of data in generating
11 reports of survey results and findings.

12 In terms of background, the Commission is required by
13 law to "develop and implement a system to comparatively
14 evaluate the quality of care and performance of nursing homes
15 on an objective basis and to annually publish the summary
16 findings of that evaluation.

17 The survey processes to be implemented under this
18 contract that results from this solicitation will collect
19 information about the experience of care from families and
20 responsible parties." This information will be used to report
21 to the public on our consumer website.

1 In the past, we have conducted this survey on an
2 annual basis. In fact, we have conducted a long-term stay
3 survey as well as a short-term survey and due primarily to
4 budget constraints, we are only administering the long-stay
5 survey, and we are administering on a bi-annual basis. So, in
6 another year, we will conduct the survey.

7 I am assuming that you all have read the RFP, and you
8 know the various components of the RFP. The survey is about 34
9 questions. There are five domains. We have roughly about 222
10 nursing homes in the state of Maryland that would fall under
11 this project.

12 And, I would draw your attention to the methodology
13 report and the statewide report that Andrea sent out to you I
14 think --

15 MS. ALLEN: Yesterday.

16 MS. LEE: -- yesterday. So, I think you will get a
17 lot more information regarding the methodology that was used
18 and some additional detail in terms of number of -- the sample
19 size for example of about 24,000 -- a little over 24,000
20 surveys that were actually administered. Among those, 200 plus
21 nursing homes in the state of Maryland. It is a mailed survey

1 with a follow-up mailing, a post card. That was part of the
2 methodology from previous years, a post card as well as follow-
3 up phone calls. And, then there is also included in the
4 process, the need to work with the nursing homes to get the
5 most accurate listing of family or responsible party to -- so
6 you can have the persons to whom the survey will be sent. So
7 there is also a need to have a secure portal or method for the
8 nursing home to transmit their information to the vendor for
9 survey administration.

10 I don't want to provide too much information that you
11 have already read, but we did get several questions, and Andrea
12 sent those questions and the responses to those questions to
13 you. And, I am assuming that is informative and perhaps
14 answers some of the questions you may have had.

15 We recently received seven additional questions, and I
16 will go through those. If you have not seen those questions or
17 responses, I have not given responses yet, so hopefully I will
18 be able to answer them.

19 Are there any questions before I proceed to these --
20 to go over these questions?

21 [There was no response].

1 And do you have persons on the line?

2 MR. KIASI: I have a question, but it can wait until
3 you are done with the seven.

4 MS. LEE: Okay. Okay, the first question.

5 Question: "The experience of care survey project has
6 been administered annually over the past few years.
7 How satisfied has the MHCC been with the previous
8 vendor?"

9 We have been very satisfied with the performance of
10 the previous vendor.

11 Question: "The survey project has been administered
12 in the last few years. What would MHCC like to see
13 improved upon in coming survey administration cycles?"

14 The previous vendor has given us some recommendations
15 for possible improvement. Those would be -- you will find
16 those in the methodology report I believe at the end.

17 Our plan for this first-year administration is to go
18 with the survey that we have had in previous years, and based
19 on the experience of the contractor, we would assume there may
20 be some recommendations for modifications, enhancements. There
21 may be other surveys out there that you know of that may

1 include questions that we haven't thought of that you may think
2 are relevant. So, we are definitely looking for guidance from
3 our contractor on possible changes, additions, modifications.

4 Question. "Does MHCC expect there will be
5 modifications to the 2016 survey for the 2018
6 administration?"

7 The answer is no. We don't expect to modify the
8 survey. So what you see, the questions you see, the number of
9 questions you see, represents what we will be going with, with
10 this first administration. Okay?

11 Question. "What will be the required margin of
12 error at the facility level?"

13 And, I don't know if the person who asked the question
14 is in the room and can elaborate on the question for me. I
15 think we will try to get more information and then respond I
16 assume in writing and send out the responses to everyone.

17 Question 5. Five. "What criminal background check
18 requirements are required for contractor staff not
19 located in Maryland?"

20 Again, I will have to confer with our Procurement
21 Officer to determine how to respond to that question. Okay.

1 Question 6. Six. "On page 16 of the RFP, item 7, it
2 states the contractor will provide predictive analysis
3 examining sample characteristics and preferred
4 unfavorable outcomes. Can you clarify, provide
5 examples of what kinds of variables you would expect
6 to include in this predictive analysis?"

7 We will have to respond in writing to that question
8 as well. Okay.

9 And finally,

10 Question 7. "Is electronic administration of the
11 survey an option?"

12 It is an option in terms of supplementing the
13 mailed survey if you want to propose something like that. But,
14 we believe that sending out the survey to family members is the
15 best way to get that information to them. And even that, you
16 know, the response rate as you can see from the methodological
17 report, it is still a challenge as it is in most surveys.

18 So if -- we are open to innovative ideas, new ways of
19 proposing this -- implementing this project. So, we don't want
20 to discourage any of that, but we are very comfortable with the
21 way in which it has been done in the past, and the results have

1 reached over 50 percent, which is a requirement at the response
2 rate in the end. So, but again, don't consider that to be a
3 statement that we don't want you to propose any new or
4 innovative approaches if you have them. Okay?

5 Again, the proposals are due -- I think this is
6 probably what you are going to go over at the end of the
7 meeting -- but, February 21st. There is an MBE requirement,
8 MBE subcontractor goal of 29 percent and a VSBE subcontracting
9 goal of 1 percent.

10 So, that is my introductory overview. And, I would
11 like to open it up to questions if you have them.

12 MS. SUTTON: I am sorry. This is not a question, but
13 --

14 MS. ALLEN: I am sorry. Could you state your name
15 before you ask your question?

16 MS. SUTTON: Yes, this is not actually a question. My
17 name is Janet Sutton. There are bidders on the conference
18 line. I just wanted to let you know that in case you --

19 MS. ALLEN: Yes, our IT person did not set up the --

20 MS. SUTTON: Oh, and it won't be set up then?

21 MS. ALLEN: I don't know. She will go in and --

1 MS. SUTTON: Okay. Thank you.

2 MS. LEE: And in light of that, we will try to get the
3 names of --

4 MS. ALLEN: -- I have everyone.

5 MS. LEE: Oh, okay.

6 MS. ALLEN: Well, not the names of all the people --

7 MS. LEE: Okay.

8 MS. ALLEN: -- but the firms.

9 MS. LEE: Okay. So any questions and any responses
10 will be provided in writing to everyone here and those that are
11 on the line. And hopefully, they will be able to hear us
12 before we complete.

13 MS. ALLEN: I do apologize for that.

14 MS. SOMMERS: Anna Sommers. Could you clarify. You
15 first said, "requirement," but you clarified that it is a goal
16 of 29 percent and 1 percent. Could you clarify what "goal"
17 means? What is the minimum requirement?

18 MS. ALLEN: That is the minimum requirement.

19 MS. SOMMERS: That is the minimum --

20 MS. ALLEN: Yes.

21 MS. SOMMERS: -- requirement.

1 MS. ALLEN: You can go over the goal, but you can't go
2 below the goal -- I mean, you could but it would -- guarantee
3 you of getting in the, you know --

4 MS. SOMMERS: You would be disqualified?

5 MS. ALLEN: Possibly.

6 MS. SOMMERS: Yeah, okay. And is it a percentage of
7 the total contract or the total hours?

8 MS. ALLEN: Total contract.

9 MS. SOMMERS: Thank you.

10 MS. ALLEN: Yes.

11 MS. DJANGALI: Amy Djangali. I had a follow up to
12 about subcontracting goals. If we had a firm that kind of
13 checked both boxes and we gave them 30 percent, would MHCC
14 consider --

15 MS. ALLEN: Yes.

16 MS. DJANGALI: -- one firm meeting both?

17 MS. ALLEN: Yes. For veteran and --

18 MS. DJANGALI: Mm-hmm.

19 MS. ALLEN: -- MBE? Yes.

20 MS. DJANGALI: Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. ALLEN: Yes, ma'am?

1 MS. SCHNEIDER: I have a couple --

2 MS. ALLEN: -- Oh, your name please?

3 MS. SCHNEIDER: I'm sorry. Jo Anne Schneider.

4 MS. ALLEN: Okay.

5 MS. SCHNEIDER: I have a couple substantive questions
6 and then a couple related to subs.

7 MS. ALLEN: Okay.

8 MS. SCHNEIDER: First of all, are you also including
9 nursing facilities that are a parts of CCRC's?

10 MS. LEE: We are including the 222 nursing home
11 facilities defined by MHCC to be nursing home facilities.
12 Their affiliations with other entities is not factored into
13 this. So --

14 MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay.

15 MS. LEE: -- if you had specific nursing homes that
16 you were questioning, you could always put a question to us.
17 Are we willing to use these particular nursing homes --

18 MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay.

19 MS. LEE: -- and we can respond.

20 MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay. The reason I am asking is that
21 one of the criteria by the way --

1 [CONFERENCE CALL PARTICIPANTS JOINED THE MEETING].

2 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Hello.

3 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Hello.

4 MS. ALLEN: Hello. Thank you for joining us. I do
5 apologize for the late joining, but if you could state your
6 name -- or do you want to do that now? Should we wait?

7 MS. OLINGER: Yes, this is Lois Olinger from Westat
8 and my colleague David Bradley. Thank you.

9 MS. ALLEN: Thank you.

10 MR. ROBERTSON: This is Brian Robertson and Jennifer
11 Oliver Market Decisions Research.

12 MS. ALLEN: Is anyone else there?

13 [There was no response].

14 Okay, so --

15 MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay. So, to continue with the
16 question, the reason why I ask that is that one of the
17 exclusion criteria is that the responsible party lives at the
18 same address.

19 MR. ROBERTSON: Is it possible you can speak up? We
20 can't really hear what's going on.

21 MS. LEE: Could you push -- could everyone just push

1 the little -- that button?

2 MS. SCHNEIDER: Yeah, where is --

3 MS. LEE: When it turns green --

4 MS. SCHNEIDER: -- okay, I'm sorry.

5 MS. LEE: There you go.

6 MS. SCHNEIDER: Technology challenge today. Okay.

7 MS. LEE: And for those of you on the phone, I just
8 provided -- this is Theresa Lee. I just provided a brief
9 overview --

10 MR. ROBERTSON: Mm-hmm.

11 MS. LEE: -- of the project, and everything that I
12 talked about is contained in the RFP and -- except for seven
13 questions that just came recently and we are going to send
14 those responses out in the mail in the next few days.

15 MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay. And, this is Jo Anne Schneider
16 from Chrysalis Collaborations. We are an MBE/DBE firm, women
17 and disabled-owned. And actually, I started life out at
18 Westat. Glad to see -- hear from you guys.

19 So, the question I was asking, the first question was
20 are CCRC nursing homes included. And the second question was -
21 - which was the real reason for asking this -- is that one of

1 the exclusion criteria is that the responsible party is at the
2 same address, and as I am sure most folks know, you often have
3 a situation where you have a couple and one member is very
4 frail and ends up in nursing and the other is either in
5 independent living or they are in something in between because
6 they started out in, say assisted living for the person who is
7 frail and the person who is frail moved and so they are still
8 there.

9 So, is there reconsideration of those criteria based
10 on the fact that there are more and more CCRC's and this is
11 more and more common?

12 MS. LEE: We have not considered a need for an
13 exception to that exclusion criteria and perhaps --

14 UNIDENTIFIED TELECONFERENCE SPEAKER: You just faded
15 out.

16 MS. LEE: I was -- in response to the question, I
17 stated that we had not considered an exception to our exclusion
18 criteria in light of the situation that was just mentioned.

19 So, what I am hearing from you is that the spouse
20 lives on the -- let's say the grounds or --

21 MS. SCHNEIDER: Right.

1 MS. LEE: -- but they lived in a separate area --

2 MS. SCHNEIDER: Right.

3 MS. LEE: -- separate type facility and they are not
4 at the nursing facility.

5 MS. SCHNEIDER: Correct.

6 MS. LEE: So, we can consider that, maybe talk a
7 little more about it and then send a response with all of the
8 other responses to see if there is any need for an exception.

9 Do you know -- do you have a sense of how many
10 facilities that would impact?

11 MS. SCHNEIDER: I know this -- the central region, and
12 I know Montgomery County. I probably could not get the numbers
13 off the top of my head for the entire state.

14 MS. LEE: But, for the ones you know of, how many are
15 you talking about?

16 MS. SCHNEIDER: Oh, gosh. They keep growing. Yeah, I
17 couldn't do it off the top --

18 MS. LEE: Okay.

19 MS. SCHNEIDER: -- of my head. I am sorry.

20 MS. LEE: Okay. Fair enough. Okay.

21 MS. SCHNEIDER: The second question I had, which was

1 substantive for everybody, was could you talk about some of the
2 sort of extra projects you might look to have as part of this
3 contract?

4 MS. LEE: In terms of extra project -- analyses, I
5 would assume you're speaking of.

6 MS. SCHNEIDER: Yeah.

7 MS. LEE: So, the primary goal as I said is to get the
8 information out to the public and feedback to -- provide
9 feedback back to the individual facilities. And, so the
10 contractor would send the report -- individual reports to the
11 facilities. And, it is also posted on our website. And we
12 have a summarized state report.

13 We are always looking for ways in which we can slice
14 and dice this, the data differently, perhaps through trend
15 analyses of what is working, what is not, where are there areas
16 that we would like to inform the nursing homes that perhaps
17 they need to do some -- you know, pay attention to.

18 So, that is the type -- those are the types of
19 analyses that we are thinking of. We have not had the ability
20 to really spend a lot of time on that part of it for a variety
21 of sort of internal reasons. But, it is something that we

1 would look to again for our contractor if they had ideas of
2 other ways of looking at the data that we currently capture to
3 generate some interesting analyses.

4 MS. SCHNEIDER: Great. And would there be any
5 consideration for the qualitative analysis since the additional
6 qualitative data collection or is it just the mailed survey?

7 MS. LEE: You can -- in your proposal -- again, I
8 don't want to stifle creativity and certainly stifle anything
9 that would move us forward in terms of a changing environment,
10 if you will.

11 MS. SCHNEIDER: Sure.

12 MS. LEE: So, we are open to consider various ideas.
13 You just need to be -- just to recognize that if it influences
14 your proposal price, that is your decision. Do you know what I
15 mean?

16 MS. SCHNEIDER: Sure.

17 MS. LEE: We have certain requirements so that there
18 is a level playing field. But, if it is something that is
19 embedded into the analysis because there is something that you
20 see that is -- the field is changing in a certain way, so in
21 the analytic funds that are being proposed, you know, if you

1 wanted to give examples of some of the things that we could
2 look at, that would be well received, I mean, from my
3 perspective to get more feedback on how things are changing and
4 what we should be looking towards.

5 MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you. One question on subs. I
6 don't know who is unique in this room, but I have been doing
7 this for 30 years, former AAA fellow at NIH for -- blah, blah.
8 Chrysalis Collaborations has existed for two years, so you
9 know, under this entity name, the experience is not there.

10 Would you consider for subs' experience in particular
11 or in general, experience that was done under a different
12 entity or as part of one's earlier career?

13 MS. LEE: Is that a procurement issue?

14 MS. ALLEN: No.

15 MS. LEE: Can I answer?

16 MS. ALLEN: That is fine.

17 MS. LEE: I would certainly -- if you could make that
18 connection --

19 MS. SCHNEIDER: Sure.

20 MS. LEE: -- with individuals or whatever, it is not
21 as important what the entity name is. It is just looking for

1 that experience as long as it is in compliance with the
2 requirements --

3 MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay.

4 MS. LEE: -- procurement requirements.

5 MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

6 MS. ALLEN: Questions from anyone?

7 I thought you --

8 MR. KIASI: You had somebody else ask the same
9 question.

10 MS. ALLEN: Okay.

11 MS. LEE: Okay.

12 [Laughter].

13 MS. ALLEN: Any -- yeah, sure.

14 MS. SOMMERS: Okay, Anna Sommers, RTI. I just wanted
15 to get a little clarification around the language in the RFP
16 regarding the minimum response rate.

17 So, the appendices of the methodology report that you
18 provided, it does not include the response rate for individual
19 facilities. And, there is some indication that facilities did
20 not receive a results report, that the response rate was not
21 high enough.

1 So, my first question is how many facilities, if any,
2 did not reach a 50 percent response rate?

3 MS. LEE: Well, you are speaking to the attachments
4 that we sent? Okay. So, I am not following your question,
5 basically.

6 MS. ALLEN: Speak into the mic.

7 MS. LEE: Speak into the mic. I am sorry.

8 [Laughter].

9 So, what we sent you was by facility -- the response
10 rate by facility, and some were below 50 and some were above
11 50. Correct? But, you are saying when you went through --

12 MS. SOMMERS: Well, the report --

13 MS. LEE: -- well you don't know the facilities
14 because we took the name out.

15 MS. SOMMERS: Oh, the overall response rate in this
16 report for all the facilities combined --

17 MS. LEE: -- In the detail --

18 MS. SOMMERS: -- but --

19 MS. LEE: -- by each facility is reported without the
20 facility name.

21 MS. SOMMERS: Okay. So, I clearly missed that.

1 MS. LEE: You know what? It may -- it is Attachment 1
2 and 2. One is -- there are two different timeframes. We
3 provided response rates right before the call started, and then
4 the first response rate, I think after the first --

5 MS. DEPPE: Before the second mailing.

6 MS. LEE: -- before the second mailing.

7 MS. SOMMERS: Okay. So, then I presume that all of
8 the facilities exceeded 50 percent after the calls were made.
9 I am asking because of the RFP contractual requirement to
10 obtain a 50 percent response rate for every facility, which
11 places the contractor at risk. And, I -- what I wondered is in
12 the previous contract whether that was a requirement --

13 MS. LEE: Yes.

14 MS. SOMMERS: -- of the contract or if this is a
15 change in the contractual language.

16 MS. LEE: It is not a change in the contractual
17 language, but I think on this question we should provide some
18 clarifying information to make sure because it makes a big
19 difference I understand the pricing, so you can get them all up
20 to at least 50 at the end of the survey cycle.

21 MS. SOMMERS: And again, I might have missed this in

1 the most recent attachments, but I did not see -- well we saw
2 the calculation of how the response rate was calculated for
3 prior reports. In the RFP itself, we did not see a required
4 methodology for that calculation.

5 So, that's a concern for us, and I would think it
6 might be a concern for you too because if you have not
7 specified how the response rate is to be calculated, that is
8 something that could vary by contractor, and also possibly not
9 be in the proposal if it is not a required element of the
10 RFP's.

11 MS. LEE: We did in the attachment send a
12 methodological report as well as documents that -- an example
13 of the response rates, some of which -- well the last one was -
14 - that we mentioned was before the calls were made. So, you
15 will see several facilities were below 50 at that time.

16 MS. SOMMERS: Okay.

17 MS. LEE: So, I don't want to say anything that could
18 lead you all in one direction or the other. I would rather
19 give you something in writing to be very specific so you will
20 know in the end. But, I would recommend that you look at the
21 methodology report that was sent out as an attachment.

1 MS. SOMMERS: Yeah, I think our concern is not the
2 methodology itself, but what the requirement is for the
3 calculation.

4 MS. LEE: Right. So, I want to say that we did not
5 specify exactly how it is to be calculated, but we would review
6 a reasonable calculation submitted in your proposal. And, what
7 we have in -- under the previous contract was accepted a
8 reasonable method for calculating the process and it is
9 reflected in the results that we have for those years.

10 But, I still understand what your question is, and I
11 think that there is some additional clarity that we can
12 provide.

13 MS. SOMMERS: Yeah, I think we would need to see that
14 clarity in writing. And, you know, we just have a general
15 concern as I imagine other contractors in this survey will too
16 that response rates, particularly for mail and phone, would
17 need to go down. And so, every year its worth, you know,
18 without offsetting strategies that add to the costs to advance
19 the methodologies to increase response rates. So, that will
20 add some variability in the kinds of proposed, you know,
21 enhancements that you will get.

1 So, any clarification around what is required and the
2 amount of risk that you are expecting the organization to take
3 on, would be helpful.

4 MS. LEE: So, I looked on page 13 in the RFP and it
5 says, "For facilities with response rates below 50 percent
6 implement efforts to increase the response rate as proposed in
7 survey methodology."

8 "The contractor shall incorporate a cumulative final
9 response rate into each nursing home's report and the statewide
10 report. The contractor shall include each nursing home's
11 response rate in the methodological report and in the
12 electronic files prepared for public report."

13 Well, that note does not answer your question, does
14 it?

15 MS. SOMMERS: I failed to just point to -- I should
16 have pointed to Section 2.3.1.2.2.

17 [Laughter].

18 MS. LEE: Okay.

19 MS. SOMMERS: The sentence reads, "If the contractor
20 fails to achieve at least a 50 percent response rate per
21 facility, the contractor shall continue data collection

1 methodologies until at least 50 percent response rate is
2 achieved."

3 MS. LEE: Right. "The contractor" shall "bear" all
4 "cost" associated with "additional data collection activities."
5 And, I am sure that is a relevant statement to your concern.
6 So, let me -- we will include a response --

7 -- I'm sorry. Did you have a question --

8 MS. GIAMBO: Yeah, well --

9 MS. LEE: -- or a comment?

10 MS. GIAMBO: -- it is more --

11 MS. LEE: Okay.

12 MS. GIAMBO: -- Pamela Giambo with Westat. So, for
13 example, we know in 2016 there were numerous facilities that
14 did not achieve 50 percent. So, this statement would not seem
15 to apply if it is the same approach for 2018.

16 And, one issue is some of these facilities I noticed
17 one had three respondents total --

18 MS. LEE: Right.

19 MS. GIAMBO: -- three -- if three of those spouses are
20 unable to respond for other reasons, then it is easy to not
21 have 50 percent. So, this is a concern for us.

1 MS. LEE: Right. And for the smaller sample size,
2 they would not be reported, but it still is a concern. I
3 absolutely get the concerns that you all have.

4 MR. HASSAN: Olu Hassan. I have a question, a follow-
5 up to the question pertaining to the response rate. If the RFP
6 demand 50 percent for the response rate, if a contractor tried
7 and could not get 50 percent for the response rate, what is the
8 consequence of this? Is there any penalty?

9 MS. LEE: I know we did not penalize the contractor
10 for not achieving 50 percent on -- for each facility because
11 there maybe circumstances where 50 percent was not achieved.

12 But, I definitely would prefer to respond in writing
13 after going back and reviewing our work and how work with the
14 contractor during that period with the response rate, before I
15 give you a final --

16 MR. HASSAN: Okay.

17 MS. LEE: -- answer. Okay.

18 Any other questions or questions from persons on the
19 phone?

20 [There was no response].

21 MS. SOMMERS: Sorry, I have one more question if there

1 are none on the phone. Just to clarify. I think you explained
2 this, but I just want to be very sure I understand. So, the
3 previous contract was for \$1,233,000 over five years. That
4 figure reflects a contract for five surveys each involving data
5 collection and reporting because you said it was an annual
6 survey, but now it is moving to a bi-annual survey.

7 So, there would be how many surveys in this contract
8 versus the prior one?

9 MS. LEE: Right. And remember the prior survey
10 included a long-stay survey as well as a short-stay survey,
11 which is why we included a statement. In the response it says
12 it was about 172,000 for the 2016 long-stay survey.

13 MS. SOMMERS: \$172,000?

14 MS. LEE: Yeah.

15 MS. SOMMERS: Okay.

16 MS. LEE: Yeah, and that's one of the --

17 MS. SOMMERS: That is in the attachment?

18 MS. LEE: Oh, so we will put that in the next one. I
19 think what we -- we changed it in and just put in the contract
20 price, but this is a little tricky because the last year we
21 only did one survey. So, it is important to see the contract

1 price versus doing one long-stay survey. And, that is the
2 172,000 and some change.

3 MS. SOMMERS: Thank you.

4 MS. SCHNEIDER: I have just a couple of things. On
5 page 73 which is the MBE participation page, given that
6 Maryland is one of the few states that has disabled as a
7 separate category and that people with disabilities are frankly
8 the worst in terms of stats for business and employment, I was
9 surprised that it is not on here, and I am wondering if that is
10 an oversight.

11 MS. ALLEN: I have nothing to do with the template.
12 This comes from MDOT, Maryland Department of Transportation
13 MBE program in collaboration with all the departments, DBAM,
14 Department of Budget and Management, and Department of General
15 Services. These are sub-goals, but there are no sub-goals
16 associated with this RFP.

17 MS. SCHNEIDER: Ah.

18 MS. ALLEN: Okay?

19 MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay. You are just telling me this is
20 something I need to follow up with them on because
21 unfortunately our federal government -- even though they have a

1 7 percent goal for employment for people with disabilities on
2 all categories on any contract -- don't include it in the
3 federal which is why you are not seeing it here.

4 MS. ALLEN: Absolutely.

5 MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay, thank you.

6 One other substantive. I'm wondering how this survey
7 fits into other data collection on using home quality,
8 specifically, since the people who are responsible for
9 themselves are excluded. And, that was I think -- what was it,
10 2036 last year? Is there some other mechanism to get their
11 information?

12 MS. LEE: We have not established any other mechanism
13 to get that. At this point it really does focus on the nursing
14 homes with the exclusion that we have identified.

15 MS. SCHNEIDER: Sure. Thank you.

16 MS. ALLEN: Does anyone have any more questions?

17 MS. GIAMBO: Pamela Giambo for Westat. I was -- I
18 believe in one of the answers -- I think someone had asked how
19 many calls were made to help with the budgeting. And, I think
20 the answer was 3,996 call times.

21 In Attachment 2, it looks like there are 5,596 non-

1 respondents in the low response facilities before the calling.
2 So, I guess, eventually it would be interesting to know why the
3 disparity between the 5,596 from Attachment 2 versus only 3,996
4 outgoing calls. So, that would help us with budgeting.

5 MS. LEE: So, I know the attachment that contains the
6 total number of calls. But, your other reference to 5,000
7 calls, is that in the methodology report?

8 MS. GIAMBO: No, if you look at Attachment 2, which
9 shows -- Attachment 2 shows the response rates pre-calls, and
10 there is a column that says, "not returned." So, presumably,
11 this would not return something would have gotten a call. And
12 if you add those up from the facilities that had response rate
13 below 50 percent, you end up with 5,596 if I did the addition
14 correctly.

15 So, I guess the question is were they not called
16 because the contractor did not have a phone number for them?
17 Again, this helps us with budgeting.

18 MS. LEE: Well, these are from response rates as we
19 are going through the process of --

20 MS. GIAMBO: That is right. So, in theory though --
21 oh, I am sorry. I am looking at the wrong attachment.

1 Attachment 1, "Long-stay Response Rates Pre" -- oh, no, no. I
2 am sorry. I think it is Attachment 2. Attachment 2, "Long-
3 stay Response Rate Pre-calls."

4 Presumably, the contractor would call everyone who had
5 not returned the survey if they were from a facility that had
6 not yet achieved the 50 percent. Is that right? Am I
7 understanding that correctly?

8 MS. LEE: The contractor would call those who did not
9 return the survey from facilities that were below 50 percent.

10 MS. GIAMBO: Right.

11 MS. LEE: Right.

12 MS. GIAMBO: So, when you take that and when you add
13 that up, the number comes to 5,596. So, I guess the question
14 for the contractor is they only made 3,996 calls.

15 MS. LEE: So, because over the course of the contract,
16 we receive these updates with calls and the number of calls
17 made at that point in time, I just want to confirm that we do
18 not have another update that had a higher number. So, we try
19 to tie the dates to the schedule, so that you would get a sense
20 of at this point and time, there were "x" number of calls that
21 needed to be made versus at the -- by the end of the contract,

1 these were the total calls made. And, I just wanted to confirm
2 that just for clarity --

3 MS. GIAMBO: Okay.

4 MS. LEE: -- that there is no discrepancy there.
5 Okay?

6 MS. C. CHOE: I think -- oh, sorry. Chris Choe,
7 Enalogic, a veteran-owned small business. I think we may have
8 an answer to your question. I just want to direct the
9 microphone to Jamie here.

10 MS. J. CHOE: Well, I was just thinking that the
11 discrepancy between the numbers might come from the fact that
12 so, you know, when a facility has below 50 percent response
13 rate, you know, you do not make all those phone calls all at
14 once in one day I assume. So, there is a progress going on.
15 So, once the calls are made, they are returned and the response
16 rate goes above 50 percent, I will assume that, you know, you
17 will stop because there is no need for us to continue.

18 So, the total number and the total number of the calls
19 that were actually made probably not equal the same. That was
20 just what I was thinking.

21 MS. GIAMBO: Right, which means that this is not

1 necessarily the latest -- the final.

2 MS. LEE: Right.

3 MS. GIAMBO: It means when we are budgeting, we may
4 not want to think about Attachment 2, but instead --

5 MS. J. CHOE: Right.

6 MS. GIAMBO: -- think about --

7 MS. J. CHOE: Sure.

8 MS. LEE: And, that Attachment 2 responds to specific
9 question at this point in time, how many calls were made.

10 MS. J. CHOE: Right.

11 MS. LEE: So --

12 MS. J. CHOE: So, it is a progress.

13 MS. LEE: Right.

14 MS. ALLEN: Anyone else?

15 [There was no response].

16 Any questions?

17 [There was no response].

18 Are we ready to go over the procurement process?

19 [There was no response].

20 Okay. So, I am going to quickly review the process
21 and address those issues and concerns, most importantly, about

1 the MBE paperwork. That will be the last thing I will discuss
2 today, the most important.

3 Okay. So, this contract will be awarded in accordance
4 with the competitive sealed proposal method that is described
5 in the RFP.

6 The contract that results from this RFP shall be a
7 combination of firm-fixed price, and a fixed unit price, which
8 are the labor hours that are in that section.

9 This contract will have a living wage. So, I'm
10 assuming that all the costs will come in over \$100,000. That
11 would be in Section 4.28, Attachment M.

12 For formatting your proposal, all of that is outlined
13 in Section 5. I will not, you know, go through it completely,
14 but please pay attention to it carefully. Please try you best
15 to format your proposals the way that it is outlined in the
16 RFP. It makes it much easier to review, and it will cut down
17 on the review time. So, please, it makes it much easier for
18 everyone.

19 The following documents need to be included with your
20 proposal. That would be the Bid Proposal Affidavit, the
21 Maryland Living Wage, again. If you are a -- if you have a

1 parent company, you need a statement from the parent company
2 guaranteeing the performance of the offeror. You need your MBE
3 paperwork, which is Attachment B-1 A, and your Veteran Small-
4 Owned Utilization Affidavit, and your Conflict of Interest.
5 All of those need to be included with your proposal.

6 And, please do not include any pricing information in
7 your technical proposal. Anything requiring price should be in
8 your financial proposal.

9 We will have an evaluation criteria where we --
10 evaluations will be conducted by a committee. We will have
11 some people from our sister commission also to help us out with
12 that.

13 Technical proposals will be equal to financial
14 proposals. So, it is 50/50. Once the committee has reviewed
15 all the proposals, you will either get a notice that you are
16 found to be reasonably responsible or you will not and we will
17 return your financials unopened. Okay? That process, we need
18 to stay aware of your e-mail because we will be sending maybe
19 clarification questions or a BAFO, anything of that nature by
20 e-mail. Okay?

21 A Controller's clearance is required before award is

1 made. So, if you have any tax obligations to the state or to
2 the federal government, you want to make sure that you take
3 care of that beforehand.

4 So, let us get to the MBE paperwork. Everything else
5 in your proposal can be cured, but the MBE paperwork, down to a
6 typo of a decimal. We cannot fix it. So, my request to all my
7 MBE's is to advocate for yourselves and get them to change
8 that. We constantly bring it up in our senior procurement
9 meetings because it is a hassle. It is unfair to you guys who
10 take the time to put together a proposal and because you may
11 have put a decimal in the wrong place, we have to throw away
12 your whole proposal.

13 So, this is what I -- if you have any challenges
14 filling out that paperwork, call me. I will walk you through
15 it. Before you submit your proposal, review the MBE paperwork,
16 please. I am begging everyone who is going to submit a
17 proposal.

18 Now, they allow MBE's to fill 50 percent of the goal.
19 You are also allowed to partner and fulfill the goal as well.
20 So, that is why there is so much more -- so many more forms to
21 fill out.

1 I suggest you not submit a waiver. The incumbent was
2 able to achieve a 40 percent MBE goal even though it was only
3 set at 30 percent. So, please do not submit a waiver. It is a
4 possibility that your proposal will be rejected. Okay?

5 Anyone have any questions about MBE's?

6 [There was no response].

7 VSBE's can be combined if you have an MBE who is also
8 a veteran. That goal can be combined.

9 So, I will be accepting questions up until February
10 14th. Yes, February 14th. That is a week before proposals are
11 due. If you had one before, I will take it. I will not make
12 you repeat your question, but I will try my best to get an
13 answer. So, that is the only thing.

14 Everyone who is here, anyone who has e-mailed me prior
15 to this meeting, will get everything first before I post it on
16 eMaryland Marketplace, before I post it on our website, but
17 that could be depending on the folks who do that for me.

18 So, make sure that I have your contact information
19 because from this point on, I will be forwarding anything
20 having to do with this RFP to you directly.

21 MS. SCHNEIDER: Quick question. For those of us who

1 have not the best (indiscernible), is there any chance of
2 getting these forms in writing?

3 MS. ALLEN: Let me see what I can do because those are
4 the procurement rules, but I will see what I can do and if
5 anyone else may want -- I thought it was easier to fill out the
6 forms. Are there certain sections you may want, just the
7 attachments or something like that?

8 MS. SCHNEIDER: The attachments and the forms.

9 MS. ALLEN: Attachments? Okay. I can do that. That
10 is not a problem. Anyone else?

11 [There was no response].

12 Okay. I will try to be expeditious about getting all
13 the information out. It usually takes about two weeks to get
14 the manuscript back from the court reporter, but I will post
15 that as well.

16 We will work on the questions, and I will try to have
17 those out by next week. If I receive any questions in the
18 interim, I will try to do them weekly. That is my goal to get
19 them out weekly.

20 So, any other questions, statements?

21 [There was no response].

1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

2 STATE OF MARYLAND)

3
4 I, LISA P. CAMPBELL, the reporter before whom the
5 foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby certify that the
6 foregoing transcript is a true record of the proceedings for
7 the January 25, 2018 Pre-Proposal Conference for MHCC 18-001,
8 Maryland Nursing Home Experience of Care Surveys.

9 I further certify that I am neither counsel for,
10 related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action
11 in which these proceedings were taken; and further that I am
12 not a relative, employee or employed by any party hereto, or
13 financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this
14 Solicitation.

15 _____
16 Lisa P. Campbell
17 Notary Public in and for the
18 State of Maryland

19 My Commission expires March 22, 2021
20