Slide 1
Moderator/Joan: Welcome to the Virtual Training Center. This is Joan Strohauer with Statewide Learning and Performance Management. Our presentation today will be Peer Coaching: A Team Approach to Succession Planning, and our presenter is Andrew Laufer, Education Administrator, California Department of Education.

Slide 2
Before we begin I'd like to give you a few tips on using Live Meeting and how to make the session more interactive. If you will look at the top right-hand corner of your screen, there are four buttons I want to call your attention to. First, is a small, green button and if you will click on the drop down menu, you will see how to give us feedback

A second button has three white pages. This is for handouts. Here you will find copies of the handouts that Andy has presented. And the third is a microphone. What you will see is that we ask you to mute. The fourth is a question and answer box. You will find that in the questions and answers you can submit questions any time during this session.

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So, now I would like to introduce you to Andrew Laufer. He has been in public service since 1985; first as a registered dietician until 1993 when he moved into the public administration and began working at the California Department of Education. He currently works in the Executive Office of the California Department of Education as an Education Administrator for the special services and support branch. He has oversight responsibility for five divisions in his branch. And he also has a Master's of Public Policy and Administration from the California State University Sacramento and a Bachelor of Science, Nutrition Science, the University of California Davis. So, let me turn you over to Andy.

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Moderator/Andy: Good afternoon everybody. How are you today? I want to thank the Department of Personnel Administration for asking me to share this program with you today. I started in the Department in 1993 as a graduate student assistant, barely got my foot in the door as an office assistant, under really similar budget circumstances that we are in today. And, over the years, I've worked my way into management. So, I am here to tell you today about a program the California Department of Education is piloting to stimulate professional development among our natural leaders at a fraction of the cost of a traditional training program. I use the term "natural leaders" intentionally because this program is not just for managers. There are many natural leaders

within state bureaucracies who would, were it not for costs or bureaucratic barriers, pursue training programs that would enhance their leadership skills. Leaders are often the "go-to" people in an organization. When they leave for promotional opportunities, a real void exists in your operations. Natural leaders are not always in management positions. They are often the informal leaders we all count on to get the work done within our own specialized units. Of course, there are plenty of managers who are great leaders too, but the opportunity to grow in leadership capacities are limited because of timing, putting out fires, insufficient funding, etc. This program is designed to provide self-motivated natural leaders, people we want to retain for succession planning, with a means to develop their skills in a stifling budgetary environment. With the right person to champion this program, any state department can utilize this program with minimal cash outlay. Action now, to prepare for succession planning, is critical; not only because of the impending exodus of state employees with institutional knowledge, but because in tough budgetary times training programs are often the first to go. We have an aging workforce, and we really need to take steps to make sure people are available to backfill important positions they retire. At the California Department of Education, for instance, over 50% of CDE employees can retire at any given moment. CDE has worked with our Executive Office, and high level managers, to prepare for succession planning. This program goes one step further to address the looming brain drain as the "grey tsunami' arrives.

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In this webinar, you will learn what a peer coaching program is; how the program gained management's support; how leadership competencies are incorporated into the program; and the benefits of the program for participants, managers, and the department. It is my hope that, after this presentation, you will download the Peer Coaching Manual and champion this program in your own department.
I, as the champion of the program here at CDE, am excited about the reaction of the five participants in the first cohort. After the first meeting on fostering a team environment, every one of them commented about how interesting the discussions were and how excited they were to participate in the program. For the second meeting, one of the participants made a point to participate via telephone conferencing. This was necessary because he was recuperating at home from an appendectomy! That is commitment! The group has also taken the initiative to propose and initiate dialogue on issues important to a broad audience within the Department. Their enthusiasm and excitement is contagious. Because of their analysis of organizational transformation in the second month, they have offered to write a white paper to provide me and the executive office with their perspective on changes that need to be made in this organization. They are stimulated, and they are empowered to contribute. Everybody should feel free to chime in with questions if you have any.

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So, last year I participated in a program called Leadership for the Government Executive at the California State University at Sacramento. Leadership for the Government Executive, at the executive level, is an 8 month program. My class met one day each month and, unfortunately, I missed the class on utilizing teams. To make up the class, I was asked to write a paper blending team concepts with mentoring. As I developed the paper, I decided to write it in the form of a succession planning proposal because we had just gone through a whole succession planning exercise here at the department. I decided to focus on coaching rather than mentoring. The usual concept of coaching involves one-on-one interactions. This program sets up a peer coaching environment that stimulates intellectual and professional growth in a team environment where all participants are equal participants. I shared the proposal with our Personnel Services Division to ensure the program was accessible to anyone meeting minimum qualifications. We didn't want a perception of unfair opportunity to any employee who applied to or participated in the program. Before taking the concept to Personnel, I needed to get buy-in from the top. Convincing the top executive of the Branch that this was a worthwhile project was not easy. I had to refine my proposal a couple of times to clarify the concepts in the proposal before he gave me the go-ahead to develop the program further. It was also critical to convince the Division Directors under the Deputy Superintendent about the merits of the project. Without their buy-in and encouragement, it is unlikely the program would work since every manager from SSM III down were accountable to them. Having the Deputy's backing, the Division Directors were asked to at least hear me out. They were hesitant about the program at first. Was this going to be doing "more with less?" They are already working at maximum capacity. How would this impact their workload, let alone their staff performance? After assurances from me that the benefits far outweighed the burden, they agreed to take time to review the program and provide me with input to make the program even better than I had imagined. After careful review, and adjusting the program according the Division Director input, I was able get their buy-in and eventually present the Peer Coaching Program to all of the managers in my Branch. Ultimately, the program was initiated with the first team of five individuals from three different Divisions in the Branch. The team has met twice in the last two months, and they remain more motivated now than when they first started.

Poll:
So, before we go onto the next slide, I'd like to take a poll. Have you ever participated in a coaching program before? Just go ahead and check yes, no or only informational. Okay, very few. Well, there we go. It keeps changing, about a third, looks like 36%, 38, 40, numbers are getting even. Okay, about 40% of you have participated in a coaching program.

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So, let's go onto the next slide then. Peer Coaching Versus Mentorship: This Peer Coaching Program relies on a process where team members support each

other to develop leadership skills, improve performance, and solve problems with the help and assistance of peer coaches. Coaching is different from mentoring. And those of you that participated in the coaching program probably recall it was more of a, well, I'm not sure. I've seen it in a couple of ways. Coaching as it was defined to me is more of a one-on-one type of meeting with somebody that has similar qualifications to you. Mentoring is more like receiving guidance and advice from an experienced individual likely to have more insight than yourself because they have different life experiences. For instance, my Branch Deputy, has been a mentor to me. He has many more years of experience than I do in management. His advice to me over the years has been invaluable. I also have other mentors that have helped me over the years with their advice. My peers though, they also have very valuable insight. They have great experience, and collectively we derived a great benefit from our relationships. So, this program is designed to facilitate dialogue between peers so they can gain experience and insight that they might not otherwise have attained by working alone. We have established a six month process where the peer group meets after researching common themes related to leadership. They are asked to follow a structured facilitation process to discuss leadership principles and to review progress on special projects. So, this program has two primary components: 1) gaining specific knowledge of leadership competencies, and 2) developing and initiating a participant project that is specific to the participant's job. Really, this component of the program really is what helped me sell it to upper management, but let's get to the competencies first.

Slide 8
So, we utilize six leadership clusters that have been identified in the State Of California's Leadership Competency Model done by the HR Mod folks. These clusters lead to a subset of competencies that are common in every organization at varying levels. The clusters are listed in this slide.
Fostering a Team Environment: Includes development of skills in interpersonal relationships, communication, team leadership and conflict management.
Creating Organizational Transformation: Includes developing skills in change leadership, vision and strategic thinking, organizational awareness, flexibility, and a global perspective.
Maximizing Performance Results: That includes development of skills in analytical thinking, decision making, focusing on the customer, planning and organizing, ensuring completed staff work, looking for results and forward thinking.
Building Trust and Accountability: Includes development of skills in ethics and awareness, and personal credibility.
Promoting a High Performance Culture: Includes developing skills in fostering diversity, workforce management, and developing others.
Building Coalitions: Includes developing skills in relationship building and influencing others. Every effective leader needs to have an understanding of the competencies within each of these clusters.

Slide 9
So, another way to take a look at these competencies and clusters is through this chart now. Competency clusters on the previous slide are broken down into 23 competencies. The competencies are spread between three layers of the organization if you look at the top of that chart there. You have Core leadership competences, which are common to everyone, manager or supervisor competencies, and executive competencies.
So, to fostering your team environment, that consists of four competencies within the first two levels - Communication, Interpersonal Skills, Team Leadership, and Conflict Management. Notice that Executive Competencies is blank. That is not to say that Executives do not possess these skills. However, Executives delegate these functions with the expectation that their managers and staff are developing or have developed the skills. Creating Organizational Transformation: Consists of 5 competencies - Change Leadership, Vision & Strategic Thinking, Flexibility, Global Perspective, and Organizational Awareness. Note here that every leader should possess these skills but that the Executive must understand and be proficient in flexibility, global perspective and organizational awareness. They expect those working for them to understand change leadership, have a common vision, and think strategically. Maximizing Performance Results: That consists of seven competencies - Analytical Thinking, Decision Making, Customer Focus, Planning & Organizing, Thoroughness, Forward Thinking, and Results Orientation. This cluster includes competencies in all thre3 leadership categories. As a point of discussion, I asked each participant in this cohort and during their orientation program if these competencies fit into each category. So, when you're looking at this chart what do you think about that? The next one is Building Trust and Accountability. That consists of two competencies - Ethics and Integrity; and Personal Credibility. These competencies are the basis for all future success. Regardless of the category, if you lack those skills, you cannot lead for long. Promoting a High-Performance Culture: Consists of three competencies - Fostering Diversity, Workforce Management, and Developing Others. This is why you are listening in on this webinar today. People listening in today want to promote a high performance culture and develop their leaders. We at CDE are demonstrating our commitment to our employees by piloting this program, and we are also promoting a high performance culture statewide by sharing this program with you.
Building Coalitions: Consists of two competencies - Influencing Others and Relationship Building. This is HUGE in making significant progress in government. This is most closely related to politics at all levels. When have coalitions been important to you in your position? Should these competencies be listed under Core Leadership or manager supervisor competencies also? These are the kinds of questions team members will be asked when they enter into this program. Personally, I think that influencing others and relationship building applies to all three areas. Okay, so we'll go onto the participant projects.

Slide 10
The second part of the process is a division specific project, but the participant, their manager and the Division Director agree on. That's really the most intensive part of involvement for the manager or Division Director is to sit down with their employee to figure out what the division project is going to be for them. The first part of the program is the leadership competency component, is conceptual in nature. This second component of the program is more practical. Ideally, participant projects should help participants meet the overall goals of the workplace. At CDE for example, I provided some hints on how to develop a concept. Page three of the manual attached to this presentation lists the items bulleted in this slide. The hints are not exclusive and you would develop your own suggestions specific to your Department. Since this program will appeal to self motivated individuals, my thought was that participants would likely have some sort of project in mind already. As it turns out, they did actually have a little bit of trouble. You know part of it was having the Division Director and the manager understand what it was that this program was asking, and then to realize the potential benefit and then sit down and put some thought into what project could work with this project. The completion of the project provides participants with added experience in an area of interest, and allows them to gain insight from their peers as the project proceeds. That's Peer Coaching. Most often, time to work on the participants project will be absorbed into the regular workday since the project is directly related to Division or unit goals. And that's another very nice component of this program. So, it's not like it's going to be, it's not like participation in this program is going to take so much extra time, because really the things that they're working on are things that the Division Director wants them to work on anyway. I should note here that the time commitments of this program are largely borne by the participants. There is no time burden on the participants, managers, or supervisors beyond normal oversight responsibilities. Participants need time to read the information we provide them related to each of the competencies and to prepare for their monthly meetings. Most often, reading and preparation is done at home. Although that's not required, but that is usually how leaders operate anyway. At a minimum, managers are asked to allow participants to attend one meeting a month for up to two hours. Okay, moving onto the next slide.

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This slide is a sample of some of the notes from our first cohort relative to their second meeting on Organizational Transformation. The group came to the conclusion that flexibility, listed as a competency under the executive level, should really be listed under each level. I think that is a reasonable suggestion and probably it came from a good discussion within their little team. I have also listed the individual projects initiated by the first cohort in the Peer Coaching Program. You may not know it from looking at the descriptions, but progress on these projects is requiring coordination across different agencies. The

completion of each project will have a very positive impact on the Divisions they work in and the Department as a whole. So, I'll just leave it right there.

Poll
I'd like to take another poll. Do you regularly meet with a professional peer group, other than in association to develop professional skills or to gain perspective? I'm interested to know what you think on that. Joan, can everybody see the results here?

Joan: Yes, the results are visible.

Moderator/Andy: Thank you. Okay, there are not as many definite answers here. Very good, so roughly 25% of you meet regularly with a professional peer group. Very interesting. Okay, let's move to the next slide please.

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So, what are the benefits of this program? Well, the obvious benefits to the program are many.
Professional development specific to the Leadership Competencies is assured, and skills needed for project management will also be developed.
Participants will establish a network of peers to confide in and consult with while continuing to grow professionally. So, their capacity to now work with a professional peer group is enhanced by direct participation in this program.
Division Directors will benefit by increasing their pool of qualified candidates for movement into leadership roles, not to mention the benefits they will derive from the initiation and possible completion of the participant projects. The Department will benefit by ensuring the integrity of the programs they are responsible for and developing staff from within the organization who will work toward the common goal of the Department. This really is a win-win-win project in that the participants, their managers, and the Department as a whole derive benefit. So, 25% of you basically have participated in some sort of peer professional meeting on a regular basis. I, for one, have had great benefit working with a few people that I met in leadership for the government executive, partially, I mean, that's one of the reasons why I've developed this program. And now, this group that's participating in this program, I can just see them, I can see the excitement in their eyes and in their voices and in their comments and they're growing. They are growing professionally and it's really neat to watch. So, let's take a look at the next slide.

Slide 13
So, how does the program work? Initially I had the program set-up for only managers, but when I presented it to the managers they commented that they had a lot of natural leaders in their divisions that would probably benefit from the program as well. So, anyone who wants to participate in the program completes an application that gives us an idea of their experience and interests.

Participants are asked to meet with their managers and Division Directors to determine what their projects will be prior to submitting their applications. That didn't quite work out in this cohort. A few of them signed up, but with their Division Director's approval, without having the plans for their project solidified, I agreed to let them in the group as long as they committed to have a plan to me before the first meeting started. The form we use for the applications are in the manual that you can download. Of course, you can customize your own form. Applicants are grouped into small teams of three to four people. We try to match participants with common interests and experience. Now on this particular cohort, we had five applicants. They were all accepted into the program. I could have split it into a team of two and a team of three, but after talking with them in the orientation we all decided that they could just all work together as a team of five. So, again we were being flexible, so we have a team of five and they're all working very well together. The Personnel Services Division Training Office and the Branch Office provided participants with an orientation meeting to discuss facilitation, ground rules, and the schedule. The question was how are we going to carry on a discussion that's meaningful without a leader? Really, they are taught how to lead themselves. They don't need me or anybody else going to their meetings to facilitate any discussions. They're taught how to do that themselves. So, every month thereafter, the teams meet to discuss the competencies, the relevant articles that we have provided to them, and their progress, or lack thereof, of their projects so that they can get feedback from their peers. Once the program is up and running, the work of the program champion is actually done. So, after I did all the work to set everything up, the team is out there doing their thing. I don't have to do very much now, the program champion, with the exception of collecting evaluation forms and providing encouragement. Evaluation forms are important. It basically tells me that they have completed their reading and their discussions for the month. And also, it's a way for each of the team members to hold each other accountable. My program analyst and I put this program together as time allowed. We were in no rush to really get the program started, so we were able to take our time in gathering materials participants would need. Materials for the entire 6 month program were placed into a binder for each participant. So, it is important that we know if this program works and if it is helpful to the participants. To do that, each participant is to fill out the evaluation at the end of each monthly session and submit it for credit toward completing their commitment and to allow us to determine whether or not the monthly meetings were effective. The evaluations, thus far, have served to be a great monitoring tool with respect to gauging the vitality of discussions and providing feedback. The evaluations also serve to keep each of the participants accountable to each other since they must address team member participation.

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At the end of the program, participants will submit a final evaluation for the organizers so that the program can be adjusted as necessary. When the

participants have submitted their final evaluation, they will receive a certificate of completion signed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson. Hopefully, as the champion I will be able to set up a nice event for that. The certificate is the prize at the end of the program for them, but participants are motivated throughout by maintaining accountability to their team members.

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Okay, so if you're interested I have done the hard work, as I have told you, by writing the basic concepts of the project down in the Peer Coaching Manual. It is located to the left of your screen up on the right of your screen I think where those three little pages are that Joan was talking about earlier. You will need to customize the program to fit your Department. The binders we provided to each participant are divided into six areas; one for each competency cluster. You may decide to prepare participants differently. The materials in the binder, most of them are not electronic so I couldn't attach it to this. If anybody is interested you will have my contact information at the end of the program here, so you can contact me and come and visit me and I will show you the binder. Each section of the binder has professional journal articles, relative to the clusters, that are required reading and help to stimulate productive discussions about the leadership area. The binder also contains a basic outline of how to facilitate discussions and dialogue. Teams are given an orientation on the use of the binders and how they can organize to ensure quality leadership for each monthly meeting, basically each of the participants take turns leading the meetings.

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The Department of Personnel Administration, via Joan Strohauer, thank you for these Joan, has got a few links up here for you. We've listed some resources that you can find on the Department of Personnel Administration website. The first item will take you right to the leadership competency model this program is based on. Here you will find much more information about the model and how it can be used and how it was put together. It was quite a process. I was very impressed with how they did that. The second item is the Leadership Competency Development Guide for 16 of the 23 competencies listed in that grid I showed you for supervisors and managers. You will find a wealth of resources on this link here to develop the specific competency. There are books, videos, academic articles, courses, on-line courses, etc… The third item is a guide to How to Prepare to Become A Supervisor. It provides information on how to become a supervisor and a self-assessment tool that an employee and his or her manager can each complete, discuss, and use in conjunction with the Development Guides to come up with a development plan for the individual. I highly recommend this program for any Department that has aspiring leaders.
So far, the process has been motivating for the participants and the champions. I believe I have met the objectives of this webinar which were to: describe to you what a peer coaching program is; how the program gained management's

support; how leadership competencies are incorporated into the program; and the benefit of the program for participants, managers, and the department.

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Thank you very much for listening to me today. I will be happy to entertain any questions you might have.

Joan: Yes, Andy there are some questions. Could you give some examples of what were some of the actual projects people are undertaking?

Moderator/Andy: Sure, I listed a couple of them on one of the slides here. Let me just get back to it here. One of the projects is a tracking system that is, we have, there are a lot of agencies involved in school construction. And we have one of the projects is tracking public school constructions projects, planning across those different tracking agencies. So, if a school wants to build a gym, for instance, they generally need to go to us. They need to go to the Office of Public School Construction. They need to go to the state architect. They need to go to a whole bunch of different agencies. So, the idea I believe in short is to have a single tracking, a single number so that each of these departments can track the progress of any project. It's really an important project. It will speed things up dramatically for school construction projects and decrease bureaucratic inefficiencies throughout. So, that's a great project that's out there. Another one is we have a whole unit here in the Department that does monitoring on a statewide basis, at schools for their nutrition programs, school lunch, school breakfast, after school snacks and so on. But there's no real reference manuals for these very highly regulated programs. So, one of the participants is developing a reference manual that will provide consistency throughout the state on how these programs are monitored. And if any of you out there have monitoring responsibilities, you know how important consistency is. There's another one that's going to, actually two of the people in the (inaudible) are teaming up to establish a wellness program and they're working across agencies to gather information and see how the program could work here in the department. I don't know if you know, but Tom Torlakson and the Department of Education is very health conscious, so he's very excited about this whole program. And then we have another person that is developing a division specific training program for all her staff. Because of turnover and so on, the training is just so important and because of our budgets, our training, we just don't have the training that we used to have, and its state workers, so she's working on a specific program. Anything else Joan?

Joan: Yes, are there going to be any other webinars like this in the future? I think I could answer that one. And that is, yes, and especially those of you interested in succession planning. We have already had one webinar from CalTrans with Randy Wavinar (sp?) on something a little bit similar. It was the mentoring program. And there are approximately 75 webinars already listed on

the virtual training center and more coming all the time. And if you would like Andy to provide others, please let him know. And any other questions? People want to send some in? Let's see, oh I got one here Andy you will like very much. It is a comment. This is a fabulous idea.

Moderator/Andy: Well, thank you very much.

Joan: That was great.

Moderator/Andy: Yeah, I appreciate that. I really do like the idea. It wasn't easy to get across and it seems to be very successful so far, with you know, minimal resource output. And we're going to get maximum, we're going to get maximum feedback or maximum, oh what do you call it, return on investment that is for sure. I think that, I mean already each of the team members are coming to me with great ideas. They're stimulating discussion department-wide on different things. For instance, in education there are these movies that are out there right now, Waiting for Superman and then Race To Nowhere, some of you are familiar with those. It's basically about the flaws in our education system. So, they actually have on their own contacted a speaker for those particular things and they're bringing them in to have discussion here at the department and stimulate discussion on how we can get things, change things along with the superintendent's goal. So, they are working in concert with the superintendent's goals and all on their own. And I'm just real excited about that.

Joan: We have a question from Stephanie. It's more of a comment. She wanted to get the contact information for you.

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So, I put Andy's email address back up. And Andy would also like to give your phone number?

Moderator/Andy: Let's just leave it with the email address for now okay.

Joan: We have another question. Do you see this as being effective for leadership for colleagues at the same level?

Moderator/Andy: Oh absolutely, that was partly my original, well that was actually one of the recommendations from the Division Directors was that, in fact, that's why we actually changed the application form so that we could determine the level of experience that each person has because she thought it would not be a good idea to put an NNSM (sp?) three, for instance, together with an SSA or an AGPA because their experience levels will be so different. So, in the application process and vetting process we try to put people together that have more similar experiences so they can peer coach each other on the same level. So, yes, I do think it would be very effective with people with the same level of experience.

And I'd really like to get more managers involved, because I as the manager in working with my peer professionals have just derived tremendous benefit from that.

Joan: Andy, here is an excellent question. Are there any labor issues around this program?

Moderator/Andy: No, well, no we designed the program specifically with that in mind. I pulled in personnel and labor relations. We made it very clear to people participating in the program that this would not provide them with any advantage to getting a promotion later on. It's really for their own professional development. And that's another reason why we opened it up to anyone so that there would be no complaints. In fact, I think actually labor would probably really like this program, because it is a means to develop their employees who belong to unions, for instance, without any measure of discrimination. The only limitation is we did have one person who applied to be on the program, but their manager said no because she was unable to get the work done that was already on her plate. So, they decided it would not be a good time for her to do that. She was a new SSA, and they wanted her to become more familiar with her position and get caught up with things before she took this challenge on.

Joan: We had another question where they can get more information on those resources. They are one the dpa website, www.dpa.ca.gov. And if you go to HR Modernization, click on that and you will find all kinds of links to the various resources. If anyone has difficulty finding them, please email me and I just sent my email address out to everyone. So, if you have any questions on that be sure to let me know and we'll assist you in finding all of them. So, any other questions? I'll just wait a minute here and see if anything comes in. And I'm not seeing any. So, Andy I want to thank you so much for sharing this great program, and I hope others will latch onto it and take a look at it and see if it would fit your department. It is these kinds of efforts that we want to share through the virtual training center. So, we want to thank you for attending. You will be receiving an email shortly with some evaluation questions, how to link to your certificate of completion. And many times people say where can I get this information and the handouts. The recorded sessions have been recorded and they will be posted to the virtual training center next week, along with a copy of the manual that Andy was referring to. And so, other than that I don't see any more questions coming in. The webinar is now over.

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Moderator/Andy: Thank you very much Joan. Thanks everybody for listening.

[End of recorded material]