

Focusing on Outcomes that Matter



Government organizations don't need to "rip and replace" to reduce technical debt, improve outcomes and digitally transform.

Rod Bremby, health and human services industry executive for Salesforce, suggests a path forward.

How are the pandemic and economic downturn influencing strategies related to digital transformation in agencies and departments that provide Medicaid and public health programs?

The pandemic-induced recession exposed service limitations of organizations that do not have mature digital capabilities. My sense is that strategies to deploy digital solutions will continue to accelerate through the recovery phase and post COVID-19, but organizations also are learning better ways to serve customers. For example, Medicaid programs are expanding the use of telehealth services during COVID-19, and CMS [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services] is working to permanently expand telehealth for home healthcare providers. Consumers have begun to experience and demand telehealth as the first site of care.

Where do agencies and departments get stuck as they modernize the way they provide health services and programs?

One place that organizations get stuck is in "good enough." Unless something's horribly broken, they stay with what works today instead of pursuing continuous improvement cycles that include customer satisfaction. Organizations that are satisfied with their current operation and their current level of

service tend not to want to adopt – or can't adopt quickly – opportunities that digital technology can offer. Change is exponentially more difficult to execute without a culture that pursues excellence in service quality. To foster a culture that responds to and embraces change, it's important to adopt a quality approach like Lean or another continuous improvement cycle.

How can cloud-based patient management solutions help organizations deliver better health outcomes at lower costs?

Cloud-based patient management solutions eliminate technical debt, so organizations can focus on innovation and service outcomes that matter instead of on keeping the operation afloat. Government agencies and departments can achieve better outcomes by placing the patient at the center of the service and providing a 360-degree view with timely and aligned engagement of service personnel. Cloud-based solutions also enable the integration of social supports that help assure attention to the social determinants of health, which we know account for a greater degree of well-being than clinical care.

How can cloud-based solutions, along with AI and machine learning (ML), help decrease fraud, waste and abuse?

These solutions permit the collection and analysis of variants within large data to provide important insights. They have the capacity to identify patterns at a scale and speed that exceeds what's available with human investigation alone. At the same time, combining skilled human investigation with these technological insights can significantly enhance results. For example, AI and ML can identify variants in patterns of behavior, payment or interactions; however, it takes

a skilled investigator to follow up on those outliers and thoroughly ensure what they're seeing is just an anomaly rather than fraud, waste or abuse.

What challenges are government contact centers encountering with the pandemic and how can they address them?

The first challenge is that the volume of calls typically exceeds the capacity of call takers to answer. In addition, not all call centers are staffed at hours when customers may require assistance. One particularly successful solution is to use bots to deflect calls from live attendants. These bots provide information that is either relatively routine or available. There are also process bots that can help a customer step through an interaction to either access a service or complete an application. These 24x7 automated attendants allow human agents to address the more complex customer interactions while permitting more customers to be served.

How can organizations use CARES Act funding to advance modernization goals?

State and local government organizations should ask their federal partners to clarify what is an allowable or reimbursable expense under the CARES Act. They should seek the funding to address immediate service challenges that can be solved through technology, but they should also consider how the procurement helps fulfill the agency's digital transformation plan. Another point is that agencies don't need to rip out an old solution and replace it entirely to get value. We suggest that they replace the components that do not work well and solve for today's challenges, but with a platform that can scale and extend across the enterprise. They can get that value in weeks and months rather than in years.