POLICY & PRACTICE

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June 2017

GEARING UP

GENERATING SOLUTIONS THROUGH INNOVATION AND INVESTING IN OUTCOMES

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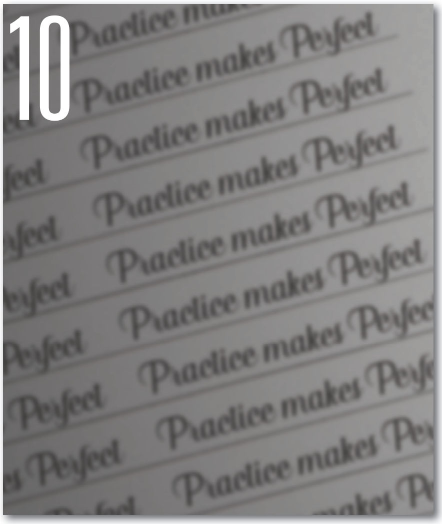

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Cover Illustration by Chris Campbell

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president's memo

By Tracy Wareing Evans

Pivotal Summit Motivated Us in Time of Change and Uncertainty

A special thank you to all of you who attended the 2017 APHSA National Health and Human Services Summit in partnership with the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities. As always, I left the Summit energized and motivated to continue our collective work. Many members and partners expressed a similar sense of renewal in the belief that together we can create thriving communities that allow all of us to live to our full potential. From inspiring and thought-provoking general sessions to content-rich breakout presentations to hallway conversations that sparked new ideas and partnerships, this year's Summit is one that history will record as a pivotal event at a time of change and uncertainty in our nation.

Dr. Gail Christopher of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation delivers her remarks.

While it is impossible in a short column to capture the many insights shared at the Summit, the convening as a whole was an opportunity to go deep into what it takes to do cross-sector work on the ground and simultaneously move systems-level change. For anyone who questions whether the social-serving sector, public systems, and private industry can work together to create this kind of impact, the Summit quickly dispelled that notion with dozens of examples highlighted from across the nation.

Through the lens of the Human Services Value Curve, we heard from leaders across the nation that if we are to become more integrative and generative we must focus more on social norms and networks, understanding how social capital or "connectedness to our community" relates to achieving economic mobility, being healthy, and living well. We must integrate health (including public health), education, and economic outcomes in tandem, not as separate issues. If, as one speaker said, we are "to let families—not programs—be the drivers of service design and delivery," we must recognize that where we live, learn, work, and play matters greatly to our life trajectories.

The built environment and community in which we live makes a difference to the things we see possible for ourselves and for our families. Where we are raised creates expectations for what we believe is possible and not possible. If your daily environment never allows you to believe something can happen (i.e., being safe in school; getting a stable job; putting money in a savings account), how effective can social programs and services be? As I heard author J.D. Vance say at an event earlier this year, "It is incredibly powerful to grow up in a place where you believe you have opportunities. If you grow up in a place where you see despair every day, it is very hard to see yourself with success." This is true even if you leave the place where you witnessed the despair. As Dr. Gail Christopher, Senior Advisor and Vice President for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, noted during her powerful message on racial healing, trauma that is experienced in childhood doesn't just go away: "Even when you go away to Yale—all the demons follow you—it is hard to compete against the things you learned when you were growing up."

We must pay attention to everyday routines, and the culture and civic life in which each child and family lives, if we are to truly move families into the driver's seat.

For me, Dr. Christopher's remarks—as she compellingly told the story of this nation's history of racism and its lasting impact on our structures

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Photo illustration by Chris Campbell

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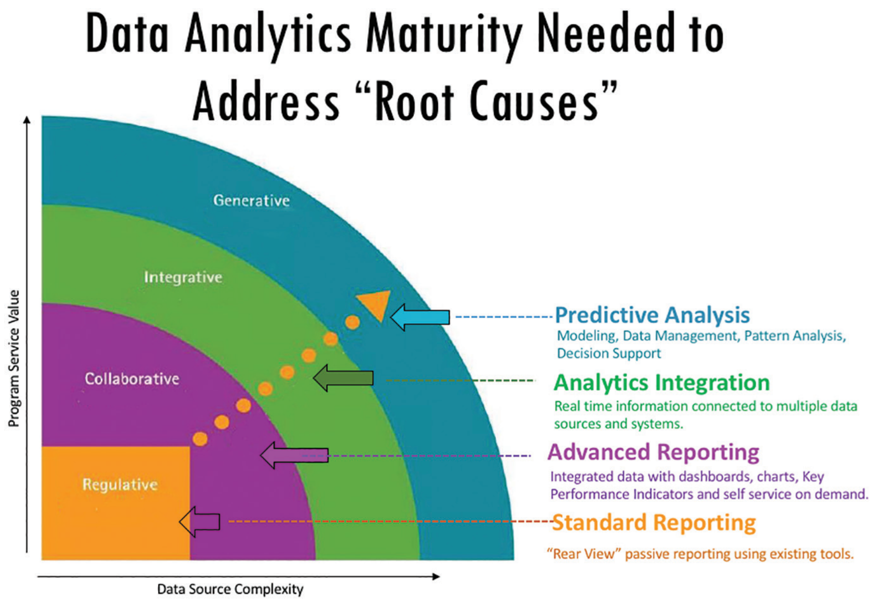
Images courtesy of the Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation

By Ronald Chavarro and John Ruthinoski

Challenging Your Assumptions:
Using Data to Improve Client Success

How do we know what we know? Much of our day-to-day work in human services is guided by conventional wisdom—the things we have learned from experience and that we know to be true. For example, one local department of social services was confident that adoptions took too long because of the delays caused by the courts. The facts, however, later revealed that the local department was the one holding up the process, causing it to take more than three years to finalize a termination of parental rights because of paperwork processing delays that were internal to the department, not external. The good news was that this meant they had control over the problem. As a result, they streamlined their business process resulting in decreased lengths of stay in foster care and increased permanency rates. How did they do this? They invested time and resources to look for the root cause of the problem in the data and challenged their assumptions through a vigorous diagnostic process utilizing a "Data Fellows" framework.

When senior management at the Fairfax County Department of Family Services (DFS) learned of the Data Fellows program and heard this story, we knew what we had to do. This program was the tool we needed to change our culture to one of data-informed decision-making at all levels. The timing was perfect as the Fairfax County Human Services System was engaged in an ambitious IT integration project designed to break down silos and allow all county human services agencies to share data across programs. The DFS wants to be ready to take advantage of these powerful data analytical tools that will enable us to get to the root cause of our customers' problems.



Data analytics maturity model adapted from FutureProof Enterprise Analytics.[1]

Last year, DFS adopted Harvard's Leadership for a Networked World's Human Services Value Curve as the basis for its strategic planning efforts with the goal of becoming a truly integrative agency by 2020. The DFS recognizes that in order to achieve this vision, we have to invest in our staff and develop the internal capacity needed to not only understand data, but to also be able to ask the right questions in order to get to root causes. The DFS combined a Data Analytics Maturity Model with the Value Curve (see diagram) to articulate the increasingly complex data analytics capacity needed by an organization in order for it to move outward on the Value Curve. For the DFS to progress to an "integrative" or "generative" agency, we needed to invest in our staff and ensure they had the skills to test their assumptions and learn what works best for our clients.

The Data Fellows Program was developed as a collaboration between the New Jersey Department of Children and Families staff and a private vendor (Public Catalyst). The program uses a "field and forum" approach that integrates teaching, exercises, and coaching to make sure skills are mastered in a real-world setting. Research has shown that adult learners retain only about 10 percent of what they hear, about 65 percent of what they do, but nearly 100 percent of what they practice in a

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By Kerry Desjardins

Utilizing Our Understanding of Brain Science to Strengthen Workforce Engagement (Part II)

Photo illustration by Chris Campbell

APHSA's Center for Employment and Economic Well-Being (CEEWB) is looking deeper into how the chronic stress of economic insecurity affects people's work readiness and employability, and how we can utilize this understanding to better serve and empower unemployed and underemployed workers. In the last issue of *Policy and Practice*, "Utilizing Our Understanding of Brain Science to Strengthen Workforce Engagement (Part I)" explained how the conditions of poverty can negatively affect the development of the brain that deals with executive functioning such as decision-making, goal-setting, and goal-attainment skills. These are the skills that low-income people need to succeed in employment opportunities that can lead to self-sufficiency. Fortunately, we have learned that the developed adult brain is flexible, so it is still possible for individuals to improve their executive functioning skills.

The human services system, through successful case management models, is well positioned to help clients exercise and improve their executive functioning skills, an important step toward alleviating the conditions that cause stress and divert cognitive resources away from a focus on self-improvement. Through its safety net programs, the human services system can reach clients and support a more secure, less stressful environment. But a more intense focus is needed for success. This article describes how executive function–informed human services can help clients prepare for, attain, and retain employment.

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Exercising and Improving Executive Functions

The first need is to look at what is necessary for individuals to improve their executive functioning skills. While ultimately it is up to individuals to strengthen their skills, executive functioning expert Adele Diamond suggests there are three basic ways to help them improve the likelihood of success:[1]

1) Work on strengthening and developing executive functions by training them, challenging them, and practicing them.
2) Work on reducing things that impair executive functioning, such as stress, lack of sleep, poor health, or lack of social support.
3) Find ways to reduce the demands on executive functioning. This can be done in part by circumventing the need for executive functions.

The *Goal Achievement Framework*

These three strategies for improving executive functioning skills can be utilized within an emerging concept known as the *Goal Achievement Framework* to help clients prepare for, attain, and retain employment. This framework requires rigorous and purposeful assessment focused on individual skills. What is the overarching goal, what skills and resources are needed to achieve it, and what skills and resources does the participant have? The assessment identifies potential obstacles to success and how the participant can overcome them. The framework has an explicit emphasis on individual goal setting and achievement with full buy-in by the client. Goals must be meaningful to the participant and both challenging and realistic. Goal planning is intentional, breaking plans into manageable, specific steps. Plans are regularly reviewed and revised as needed. Under the *Goal Achievement Framework,* the program and caseworkers provide as much support as the participant needs to successfully complete the task; no more and no less, but success ultimately depends on the individual. This framework uses incentives to engage clients and build skills and also requires great focus on active skill building involving modeling use of skills and practicing them in settings that mimic the home, school, and workplace environments. You can learn more about the *Goal Achievement Framework* on the Building Better Programs website.[2]

Designing executive function-informed programs within this framework can lead to improvements not only in clients' executive functioning skills, but also in their employment, job retention, movement toward self-sufficiency, and other positive social and economic outcomes deriving from work. Two examples of executive function-informed employment and related human services programs that have shown positive effects on clients' outcomes are described below.

Building Nebraska's Families

Building Nebraska's Families (BNF) was an intensive home visiting and life skills education program to prepare high-risk TANF clients in rural Nebraska to succeed in employment and improve their families' well-being. Evaluation of the program found large and highly significant impacts on stable employment for hard-to-employ TANF clients who faced substantial employment barriers and skill deficiencies.[3] BNF used a strengths-based curriculum to teach life skills called *Survive, Strive, Thrive: Keys to Healthy Family Living.* The curriculum teaches basic life skills in many key areas such as goal setting, decision-making, coping skills, communication skills, resilience, and time management.

The* Goal Achievement Framework *uses incentives to engage clients and build skills and also requires great focus on active skill building involving modeling use of skills and practicing them in settings that mimic the home, school, and workplace environments.

EMPath's Bridge to Self-Sufficiency and Mobility Mentoring

Based on EMPath's (formerly Crittenton Women's Union) theory of change, the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency® is an executive function tool or scaffold that allows an individual participant to be concurrently assessed in what EMPath believes are the most important areas contributing to economic independence: family stability, well-being, education, financial management, and career management. The Bridge allows staff and participants to contextualize and explore the relationships among the five areas and organize priorities for intervention and goal setting.[4]

EMPath developed an executive functioning-informed practice called Mobility Mentoring® as a platform for implementing the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency throughout its programs and services. Mobility Mentoring® is a coaching partnership specifically designed to support participants in setting and achieving their own goals, gaining new cognitive and behavioral skills, navigating available networks of learning and support, and strengthening persistence and resilience. Executive function considerations are incorporated throughout the program.

EMPath's Career Family Opportunity (CFO) Program is a Mobility Mentoring® program that started in 2009. The CFO's first cohort graduated in June 2015, with average earnings of more than $46,000 a year. Preliminary findings of a return on investment study demonstrate that over 60 months, CFO participants increased their earned income by 71.6 percent, reduced their dependence on subsidies by 20.1 percent, and increased their tax payments by 120 percent. These changes demonstrate that the costs of the program were offset by participant subsidy reductions and tax and earnings gains in less than one year after program completion.[5]

To learn more about executive functions and executive function–informed employment and human services programs, visit the CEEWB website or the Building Better Programs website.

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technology speaks

By Beth Davidson

From Pilot Project to Statewide Management: Alaska's Health Information Exchange

Photo illustration by Chris Campbell

In May 2009, the Alaska legislature unanimously passed Senate Bill 133 (AK 18.23.300), an act creating a statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE) system that is interoperable and compliant with state and federal specifications and protocols for exchanging health records and data. In March 2010, Alaska eHealth Network was awarded a contract by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services to be the advisory or governing board that would procure and manage the Alaska HIE. Since this time, Alaska's HIE has evolved from being a pilot project in interior Alaska to many organizations across the state utilizing the HIE and actively sharing data.

In 2016, the Alaska legislature passed Senate Bill 74 (Medicaid Redesign). This has been a major milestone in Alaska's effort to redesign our siloed and costly system of care. This bill mandates the use of data-driven practices and use of existing technology such as health information exchanges. In late September 2016, the Alaska eHealth Network implemented a strategic planning initiative to look at interoperability and how it can be best achieved, including the use of the Alaska HIE and health information exchange "the verb." Alaska has advanced interoperability in many ways through direct secure messaging and provider electronic health records, but there are more areas where interoperability is still in infancy, including cross-organization commitment, communication, and collaboration.

Current State of Alaska's HIE

The Alaska HIE has been a carefully planned statewide solution to address interoperability for Alaska and one that will allow our system of care to move away from a fragmented, disconnected system to a robust, high-value, whole-person system. Today, Alaska's HIE has query, portal access that allows users, with appropriate security roles, the ability to query an individual patient or client. For example, case managers—including those from child welfare, long-term support services, education, and other areas who have been granted access—can view and share necessary data for a client with other providers without having to utilize older technology such as facsimile or postal services. This query access allows the case manager (and other providers with a relationship to the client) the ability to collaborate for the whole person and provide high-quality, integrated care. Alaska's HIE is also connected to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Enterprise Service Bus, which allows providers to share data, such as Public Health data, with the department. Alaska's HIE currently has additional features and functionality to include direct secure messaging, an electronic health record solution, patient portal, and other tools.

Alaska has received and plans to request additional funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) to support design, development, and implementation activities for Alaska's HIE. Alaska currently has funding authorized by CMS to support the following activities:

I. Medicaid Personal Health Record

- This activity involves connecting the Medicaid claims data to the HIE and then allowing Medicaid recipients to view both their clinical and claims data from their HIE Personal Health Record.

II. Clinical Quality Measure Reporting via the HIE

- Alaska would like to allow providers to submit clinical quality measure data to support meaningful use via the HIE. This will allow streamlined, electronic submission of measure data. This project will also allow Alaska to collect patient-level data for clinical quality measures since the HIE has more strict security protocols than Alaska's State Level Registry solution.

III. Behavioral Health HIE Onboarding

- This activity involves connecting 60 behavioral health provider organizations to the HIE and will also connect the HIE to the Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Behavioral Health data repository that is used for state and federal reporting. The provider organizations that will be connected directly support the eligible professionals and eligible hospitals that are trying to achieve meaningful use. Connecting behavioral health providers supports the primary care providers and ultimately Alaskan patients in ensuring the full continuum of care is accessible.

IV. Nonbehavioral Health HIE Onboarding

- Alaska plans to connect 100 nonbehavioral health provider organizations to the HIE to support meaningful use and to support Alaska's Tribal Health organizations with their care coordination agreements with nontribal health care partners.

V. Health Information Technology Roadmap Development

- Alaska is in the midst of developing a robust Health Information Infrastructure Plan that will support the goals of the Medicaid Redesign bill and also support the future system of care for Alaska. The roadmap development work will determine the "as-is" and "to-be" infrastructure environments for Alaska and establish a plan for mitigating the gaps in health information technology.

VI. Prescription Drug Monitoring Program System Connection to the HIE

- This activity will connect the HIE with the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program database, which will allow authorized providers and stakeholders the ability to access prescription data via the HIE and be able to quickly evaluate a patient's medication history and needs.

VII. Public Health System Modernization and Connection to the HIE

- Many of Alaska's Public Health–specialized registries are utilizing older technology that does not support submission of electronic data from electronic health records. This activity will create a single, modern database for Public Health for many registries. The database will also utilize Microsoft CRM and other technology to allow Public Health staff to easily and quickly access data and develop any necessary reports.
- This activity will support the following Public Health specialized registries: Health Facility Data, Alaska Trauma Registry, OZ System (related to children), Alaska Birth Defects Registry, Death and Injury Registry, Alaska Drowning Surveillance System, PRISM (STD/HIV database), Lead Reporting Registry, and other specialized registries.

VIII. Master Client Index (MCI) Enhancement

- Alaska has a robust MCI. When new systems are implemented, these systems are connected to the MCI utilizing web services to collect and share new and updated client demographic data. Alaska will continue to enhance the MCI as new systems, such as the Public Health Specialized Registry database, and others are implemented.

IX. myAlaska Authentication (single sign-on to support HIE authentication for Medicaid recipients)

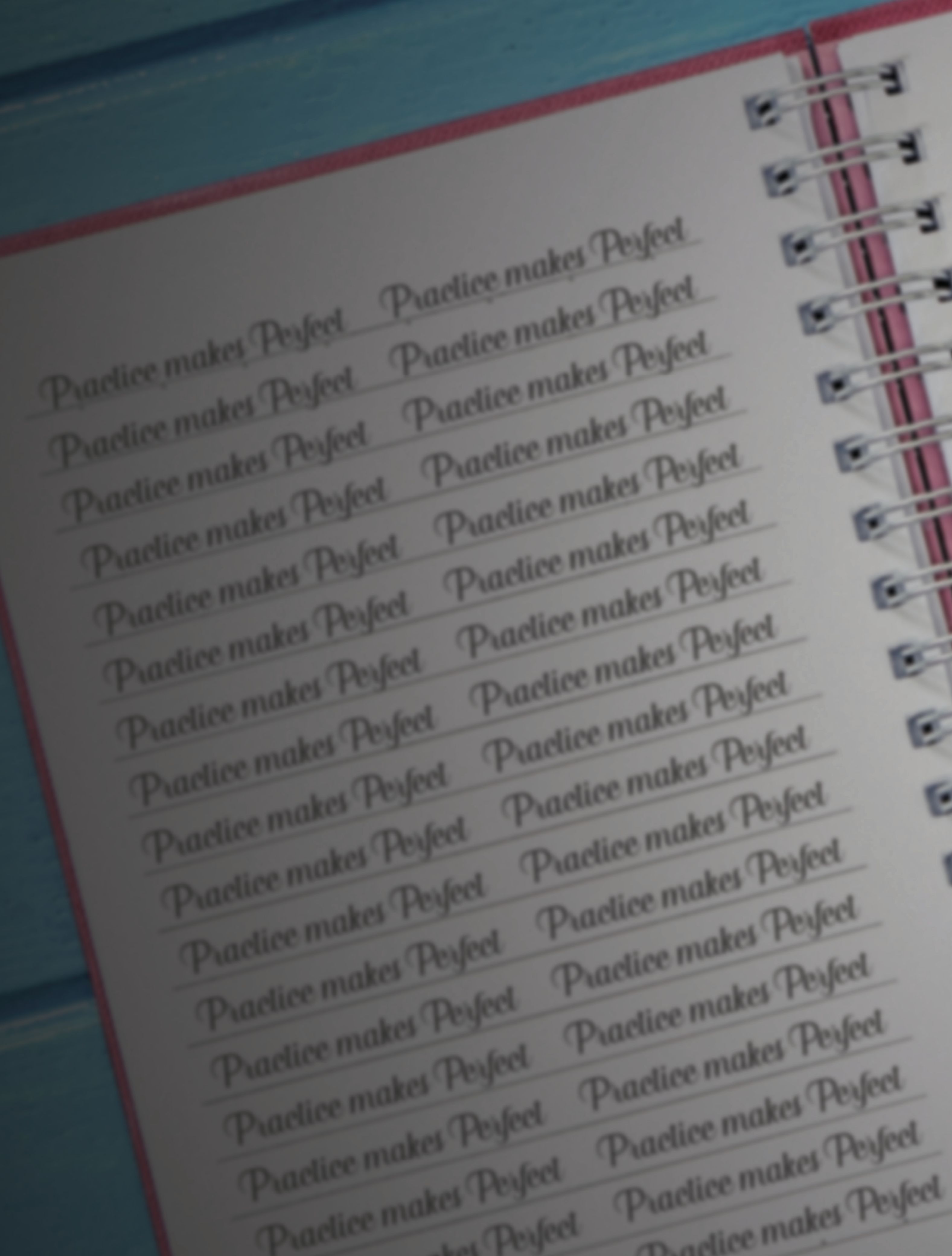
- Alaska has a single-citizen portal called myAlaska. It is through this portal that citizens can conduct business with the state of Alaska, such as renewing a driver's license or purchasing a fishing license.

This activity will support the system connection between myAlaska and the HIE, which will allow Alaskans to access their HIE Personal Health Record utilizing their myAlaska authentication.

The Future of Alaska's HIE

Alaska's HIE is still in a design and development stage and has not reached maturity. The CMS is supportive of funding through a state's HITECH Implementation Advanced Planning Document funding to support activities that help the state reach maturity with health information exchange, support providers in achieving meaningful use, and move further on the goals outlined in the Shared Nationwide Interoperability Roadmap. In the near term, Alaska's HIE is planning on connecting more participants to help coordinate access across all levels of care, implement tools to support data analytics and improve business processes, and increase the ability for Alaskans to play an active role in their own care.

Beth Davidson *is the State Health Information Technology Coordinator at the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and Alaska's Representative to ISM (IT Solutions Management for Human Services), an APHSA affiliate organization.*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How Practice can make Perfect

By Kathy Fallon

The Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking was born from a joint bill sponsored by Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA). When the bill was signed into law by then President Barack Obama on March 30, 2016, the federal government gave additional momentum to a movement that had been growing for some time.

At its core, the movement seeks to increase the effectiveness of government services, and the resulting outcomes, while at the same time lowering the cost of delivering them. The goal is to end the practice of spending vast sums of money on unproven practices that may not be achieving the desired results. In January, President Donald Trump took office, and while many existing agenda items may be in question, the focus on Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) is not losing ground with the new administration. While there is much debate on policy and programs, there is consensus around the idea that achieving better outcomes as efficiently as possible is imperative for good government.

Photo Illustration by Chris Campbell

The movement toward EBP is something to applaud, regardless of politics.

The commission is already well under way, meeting each month. In its recent meetings (5, 6, and 7), most of the presentations addressed the problem of sharing government data. The speakers offered recommendations and possible solutions for fixing the problem. Restrictions on data sharing pose a clear challenge for researchers who are trying to validate the effectiveness of EBP. These same restrictions also pose challenges for jurisdictions' replication efforts in a new environment with a different population. Data sharing fact and fiction can even pose a problem when sharing data in the same state.

The Office of Management and Budget reports, from 2009 through 2013, the Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services have directed approximately $5.5 billion to seven initiatives that support proven programs.[1] By vigorously testing programs in selected jurisdictions, and documenting the results, policymakers and regulators expect to replicate the results by following the same methods and processes. This is exactly what a social scientist should do: develop a hypothesis, implement the program, and test the results, all while hoping to achieve the intended results.

However, the experience of other scientists tells us that replicating results of scientific experiments is not as easy as it may seem. By studying the lessons from other disciplines, we can improve our odds of success in the public policy arena.

A Replication Crisis?

For a variety of reasons, results from experiments are not always replicated successfully. A team of experimental economic researchers were only able to successfully replicate 60 percent of results from prior experiments, despite following the same protocols as the original experiments.[2] Similarly, researchers at the University of Virginia attempted to replicate 100 published psychological experiments, but they were only able to gain the same results in one-third of them.[3]

Even in the laboratories of medicine, there have been replication issues. Over the course of a decade, scientists from Amgen repeated more than 50 "landmark" studies in cancer biology, but they were only able to replicate the results in six of them. This led Daniel Engber of *Slate* to declare that there is "a replication crisis in biomedicine—and no one even knows how deep it runs."[4]

If professional scientists working in controlled laboratory conditions still struggle to replicate results, how much more difficult is it then to reproduce results in the field of public policy, where programs exist with a myriad of variables, vastly different ecosystems, cultural and political variability, and subjects as unpredictable as humans?

No one is suggesting that we scrap the scientific method and set off on random and whim-based design, but it is important to pay attention to what other scientists are learning about the root causes of the replication crisis. If we can avoid those pitfalls seen in medical experiments, the likelihood of success in producing repeatable results in public policy could improve dramatically.

Evidence-Based Policymaking—Points to Ponder

1. When replicating an EBP, b***egin with the assumption that the odds of failure may be greater than those of success.*** Thinking critically about the possible pitfalls and variances that may affect your results at the outset will help you avert a complacency that could be fatal to your efforts. If you assume that simply following the exact formula of another jurisdiction will ensure the same results, you may not sufficiently question your processes and any environmental variation. If we know that replication is an issue in other domains, and we assume we will be immune, we are likely to spend valuable resources on programs that are destined to fail.
2. If any element, even a seemingly small or insignificant one, is different than the original practice you are trying to replicate, ***stop and consider how that may affect the results.*** Jurisdictions have different economic conditions, cultural and linguistic variation, educational attainment differences, divergent prevailing political viewpoints, service delivery system variability, and differing religious and cultural mores. Cultural anthropology teaches us that subtle environmental and cultural differences can result in dramatic societal variation. Make sure that the design and methodology you are attempting to replicate is not built on biases that will make success in a different ecosystem highly unlikely. The results obtained in an urban San Francisco

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If we can avoid those pitfalls seen in medical experiments, the likelihood of success in producing repeatable results in public policy could improve dramatically.

Kathy Fallon is the Human Services Practice Area Director at the Public Consulting Group.

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All In

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance Gets Behind WIOA

By Jeff McCue and Jennifer James

Signed into law on July 22, 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorized the nation's employment, training, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation programs for the first time in 16 years. Substantially different from its predecessor, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the WIOA places an emphasis on low-income adults and youth with limited training and skills, as well as on individuals with disabilities.

Photograph via Shutterstock

Under the WIOA, states were given the option to either include or “opt out” of their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP). New to the corner office at the time, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker immediately recognized that implementation of a combined WIOA State Plan provided a critical opportunity to serve both employers and jobseekers better. Thus, the Governor, Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders, and Commissioner McCue worked with the WIOA planning team to ensure that TANF and SNAP were included in the state plan.

As the unemployment rate continues to decrease, Massachusetts businesses are having difficulty filling job vacancies. Yet, regions of the commonwealth and sectors of the population continue to experience higher than average rates of unemployment, and still other individuals are involuntarily working part time or have given up looking for work. In the past year in Massachusetts, an average of 142,400 people were unemployed, and 291,025 people were either involuntarily working part time or are marginally attached to the labor force but not actively seeking work. The opportunity is to match the needs of our employer community with this potential workforce. Businesses need to recruit from these untapped labor pools to meet their demand for employees.

The Department of Transitional Assistance’s (DTA) commitment to this effort is two-fold:

- Develop meaningful pathways to work and economic self-sufficiency for low-income, disabled, and chronically un/underemployed individuals and families; and
- Ensure individuals and families with significant barriers can access the workforce system with the support needed to attain and sustain employment.

The DTA sees the development and implementation of a combined plan as a significant opportunity to leverage existing (but too limited) investments in TANF and SNAP employment programs to address barriers to employment for clients and help them move toward self-sufficiency. With the low unemployment rate, the timing could not be better to engage TANF and SNAP clients in employment supports that can lead to meaningful career pathways, longer term economic stability for them and their families, and a permanent exit from public assistance.

Developing a Combined State Plan: 15 Agencies and Counting

Led by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), with all partners around the table, Massachusetts spent more than a year developing the combined WIOA state plan. The commonwealth’s plan aimed to better serve jobseekers by adopting a career pathway model that coordinates services and treats jobseekers as shared customers among all 15 state agencies that have committed to supporting workforce development (DTA, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission [MRC], Massachusetts Commission for the Blind [MCB], Elder Affairs [EOEA], Veterans’ Services [DVS], Adult Education at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [ESE], etc.).

To ensure that this plan was inclusive of all potential customers, public hearings were held statewide before finalizing the plan. At these meetings, various communities and client constituencies voiced their concerns, issues, or support. These meetings were extremely helpful in informing the level of services needed going forward and also enabled buy-in from a diverse set of community partners and stakeholders.

Developing a system that would meet the needs of several “sister” agencies as well as provide communication between those agencies to monitor client progress was no small task. The EOLWD and the Department of Career Services (DCS) facilitated these meetings to ensure that every partner had a voice and that the resulting system would accommodate the varied needs of each agency. This included tracking registration and attendance in various workshops, reporting outcomes, and communicating this information back to the “sister” agencies.

Aligning Internal Efforts to Support WIOA: DTA’s Pathways to Self-Sufficiency and SNAP Path to Work

In support of WIOA implementation, over the past two years, DTA has

MASSACHUSETTS WIOA VISION

All Massachusetts residents will benefit from a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports **career pathways for individuals** and leads to a more informed, educated, and skilled workforce, which meets the commonwealth’s businesses’ demands and sustains a thriving economy.

Jeff McCue is the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance.

Jennifer James is the Undersecretary at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

placed a renewed focus on employment for its clients—both TANF and SNAP.

In June 2016, DTA formally launched the Pathway to Self-Sufficiency (PSS) Initiative. The goal of PSS is positive engagement for TANF clients and targeted supports that lead to employment, career pathways, and long-term economic self-sufficiency. Through PSS, DTA TANF case managers emphasize to clients the transitional nature of benefits, the importance of working to secure economic stability, and the supports available to assist them and their children to succeed.

As part of PSS, an initial job search period sets the tone for those applicants seeking TANF benefits. Once the initial job search is completed, a full assessment of a client's self-identified strengths and challenges to finding employment is conducted. In addition, to ease the transition from welfare to work for TANF clients, last year DTA instituted Transitional Support Services (TSS) stipends. These stipends are provided to former Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) grantees as they move to employment and economic self-sufficiency. Former grantees are only eligible for TSS stipends if their TAFDC case remains closed for 30 days. Stipends are available for a period of four months, in amounts that reduce over the TSS period.

The DTA has also undertaken an intensive effort to improve and grow the SNAP Employment and Training Program. The program has a new name, a new logo, and a new interactive website to engage clients *(http://snappathtowork.org)*. In the past year, DTA has doubled recruitment efforts for new providers and is in the process of re-engineering and streamlining administrative processes. The department is working directly with Community Colleges for the first time and, as part of WIOA, will be inviting the One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs) to join the SNAP Path to Work provider network. Reimbursements for program participants for the first quarter of this federal fiscal year have already far exceeded those of the same period last year. DTA staff from the previously "siloed" SNAP- and TANF-funded employment programs are working together in new ways to share information, refer clients, and develop a more integrated approach to getting the right service, to the right client, at the right time.

Career Centers as the Cornerstone of the Workforce System: So, What's Going to be Different?

Turning Shared and Infrastructure Costs Into an Investment in DTA Clients

A regular refrain heard during the WIOA journey over the past two years in Massachusetts has been: "So, what's going to be different?" WIOA has been around for a long time. Career centers have existed within our communities forever and have been expected to serve DTA clients. DTA has always—and especially since 1996—been responsible for supporting individuals and families on welfare to make the transition to work and economic self-sufficiency.

We believe many things are different! WIOA has set a new level of expectation from the federal level. Governor Baker has charged his executive leadership team, across state agencies and functions—Workforce, Human Services, Education, Housing, Economic Development, Transportation—with working together in new ways to meet the needs of employers and address barriers for unemployed or underemployed residents. The unemployment rate and the Massachusetts economy have created an ecosystem of high demand within industries and fields that DTA clients are well positioned to fill.

To demonstrate our commitment to and belief in this effort, DTA recently executed an interagency services agreement with the DCS to provide direct funding for infrastructure and shared costs at the OSCCs. The purpose and expected outcomes for 2017 and beyond include:

- Satisfaction of WIOA requirements for shared costs and infrastructure;
- Increased partnership between DTA and the OSCCs on behalf of TANF and SNAP clients;
- Joint articulation of career pathway models for low-income individuals, including DTA clients;
- Increased DTA client engagement and participation at the OSCCs via prioritization of TANF/SNAP recipients; and
- Increased DTA client job placement and retention.

With the low unemployment rate, the timing could not be better to engage TANF and SNAP clients in employment supports that can lead to meaningful career pathways, longer term economic stability for them and their families, and a permanent exit from public assistance.

The agreement also lays out expectations for local collaboration and service delivery between DTA local offices and the OSCCs, including:

- Designating staff from both to work together on behalf of DTA clients;
- Co-locating DTA staff at the OSCC to provide support, information, and resources to OSCC staff and DTA clients;
- Training for OSCC staff on eligibility, work participation, and other requirements of the TAFDC and SNAP Programs;

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Photo illustration by Chris Campbell

RECRUITING & RETAINING TALENT

Working Your Way Upstream

By Phil Basso and Angela Pittman

Having the talent you need to be successful is as important as ever—and even more so if you are changing the definition of that talent as you evolve your service design and overall ways of doing business. In a survey of APHSA members that we conducted this spring, the gap between organizational needs and workforce capacity was rated highly significant by 52 percent of our respondents, and only 8 percent rated this issue as not being significant for them. Associated issues included an aging workforce, changing attitudes of those entering the workforce, leadership changes, and capacity or knowledge gaps.

In this article we'll focus on three things:

- First, describe some current challenges and opportunities in our field regarding staff retention, and suggest a shift in the general approach we most often see being used.
- Second, introduce a practical and adaptable model for defining all the drivers of staff recruitment and retention, which is a critical first step in moving toward a more strategic approach.
- And third, outline both in general and through 10 specific steps how to move forward with your recruitment and retention efforts.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Unwanted turnover in public human services, especially of recent hires, is too high by any research measure. It is common to find unwanted turnover rates higher than 20 percent, and much higher for staff that has been with an agency for less than two years. Many agencies struggle to hire qualified talent that demonstrates the competencies needed to perform the complexities of the job, and often struggle to retain well-matched staff. Moreover, turnover is very expensive—up to twice a role's annual salary when considering the time and money involved with not only recruiting and developing a new hire, but also the impact of the vacancy on ongoing activities and on the work of other staff.

And in a larger sense, an agency that is experiencing high turnover is not likely to be building a high-performing workforce. For example, in child welfare organizations, Flower, McDonald, and Sumski (2006)[1] discovered that an increase in the number of direct practitioners decreases the chances of timely permanence for children—within the studied cohort, children with one direct practitioner achieved permanency 74.5 percent of the time, with the percentage dropping all the way to 17.5 percent for children with two workers.

Luckily, what those now entering the workforce want in an employer may be consistent with some of the natural attributes of our field, so it is really important to understand this well. The other good news is that many of the things an agency might do to improve staff retention are not very expensive, or they are things you would want to improve upon anyway.

Before we discuss the particulars of a recruitment and retention strategy, let us touch on the big picture and suggest a more innovative approach to what we typically see. "Downstream" retention work entails analyzing turnover data and scanning the latest innovations in the retention literature, and then making an improvement. What we suggest is that the more strategic and beneficial approach is to "move upstream." Determine what sort of employer you aspire to be, convey that "talent brand" both outside and within your agency, and then live your brand.

For those of you familiar with the Human Services Value Curve, this upstream approach moves your approach to Stages 3 and 4, rather than limiting progress to running a high-integrity recruiting, selection, and orientation process (Stage 1) where the candidate or new hire has a relatively easy time navigating (Stage 2).

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

So how do we get started with a more strategic, upstream retention strategy? The first step is to define all the factors that might contribute to or detract from the talent you need to join and stay with your agency. This way you can develop a comprehensive strategy, deciding where you would like to be, where you currently are, and what you would like to change, after considering each of these factors rather than only a few. This model was developed from long-standing work by the Corporate Leadership Council (CLC), which studied 6,000 high-value employees from many industries, to understand what triggers their decisions to stay with or leave their employer. They identified 30 such factors that can be organized into four general categories (see chart on opposite page).

It is important to note the CLC's research suggests that you do not have to be all things to all people. Rather, you need to stand out from your competition for talent, for a meaningful number of these factors, perhaps 8 to 10 of the 30. This research also found that employees will make a decision to actively seek another employer if they are distracted by 10 or more "push factors." These would be negatively perceived factors out of the 30, regardless of the number of those positively perceived.

Most of the factors are self-explanatory, but let us make sure a few of the nuanced ones are also clear. Under work environment, supervisor quality means having a boss that supports and guides you the way you need, not one that is micromanaging you. An empowered culture means one where clear direction is set and then staff operates with a high degree of discretion, not one where little direction and guidance is provided. Challenging work means assignments that test the limits of one's skills, while cutting-edge work means assignments in areas that are the most innovative within one's field. Under organizational environment, reputation means how your agency is perceived on the outside—with clients, within the community, in the media, and with one's own friends and family.*

Consistent with the work-life balance category factors, human services agencies that address the impact of secondary or cumulative trauma on the workforce also experience increased retention. All health and human services (H/HS) staff experience some form of this—some mild and some intensive—due to challenges experienced by the population served. As secondary trauma begins to increase the stress response, executive function and job performance are negatively affected, not to mention the secondary impact on staff's personal lives. This may be the single most overlooked workforce issue within H/HS today. By addressing this issue thoughtfully and proactively, agencies can mitigate secondary trauma, and staff can stay longer, perform better, and be confident that the organization cares about them.

So what else do we know about these factors in general? Well, for quite some time a shift has been occurring in our

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Attracting & Retaining Staff

Compensation & Benefits	Work-Life Balance	Work Environment	Organizational Environment
Base Salary	Work Hours	Supervisor Quality	Firm Reputation
Bonuses and Incentives	Workload Reasonableness	Co-Worker Quality	Firm Performance and Sustainability
Pay Equity	Work Flexibility	An Empowered, Teaming Culture	Senior Team Reputation
Health Benefits	Vacation Time/Time Off	Project Responsibility	Strategic Partnerships
Retirement Contributions	Business Travel	Challenging Work	Staff Development Reputation
	Work Location	Cutting-Edge Work	Entrepreneurialism
	Telecommuting	Recognition	Technology Level
	Child Care	Role Clarity and Alignment	
		Internal Mobility	
		Serving a Good Cause	

society, from things like a defined benefit pension and job security toward factors related to one's professional development, including many of the factors under Work Environment. This shift arguably relates to generational differences, and the millennial generation has been getting a fair amount of attention. Given that a high percentage of staff in our field may be within five years of retirement, understanding millennials as a subgroup makes sense. Research on millennials suggests that key interests for this generation include challenging and cutting-edge work, flexibility in hours and work environment, technology level, recognition, empowerment, and serving a good cause.

It is even a great idea to consider what your employees nearing retirement value most. And this may be easier to glean from their history with you, even by looking at it case by case in some ways. In general, it is likely that workers nearing retirement would be more interested in work-life balance factors, as well as making a difference and serving a good cause. One related possibility here is involving some of your more veteran staff in mentoring your newer staff—touching

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from the field

By Sixto Cancel

Is the Case Management System Hindering Young People?

Thirteen was the age I woke up. I realized I had spent 13 years being abused by a racist, adoptive woman. I was couch surfing and was not allowed to be in the house most days. I want to say I was "hard" enough to hold my own but that is a lie. I was smart enough to run when I needed to, and to talk my way out of situations. After having to record my abuse and countless investigations that resulted in nothing but therapy sessions, police reports, and other services, I had re-entered foster care at 15. Fast forward 10 years. I am now the CEO of a tech nonprofit— Think of Us—that leverages data and tech to disrupt how we empower people to be at the center of their involvement with the foster care system. In the last 18 months, I have made the *Forbes* "30 under 30" list, the White House Campaign of Change, and earned various other awards. I share this to make the point that something about being in foster care worked for me. I can point to a few things but one major reason was the staff.

Front-line staff is the core of the foster care system. When it came to helping 15-year-old me heal, develop, and thrive, it was the people from the system, nonprofit programs, and personal supportive adults who were the most effective.

Case management systems and software are the biggest influences on front-line staff. Many systems utilize severely outdated case management software systems that easily surpass my age. Software that was built and delivered in the 80s, 90s, and early 2000s is not equipped to handle modern complex situations. Technology is a constant in life that has changed how humans interact. Therefore, up-to-date technology is necessary when handling any case. Front-line staff is expected to provide concrete support in times of need without the tools to do so. This is the equivalent of asking staff to build a modern skyscraper without electricity or mechanics.

It is vital that we ask ourselves if current case management systems are the right tool front-line workers need. In the three years that Think of Us has existed, we offer this vital insight: real-time data analytic software is needed to provide staff with real-time decision-making that is accessible at

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Illustration via Shutterstock

By Debora Morris and Joseph Fiorentino

Yes, You Can!

A New Data Mindset to Improve Health and Human Services Outcomes

Photo illustration by Chris Campbell

Health and human services practitioners understand the need for policies and programs that are person centered—for a coordinated health and social care system that addresses the behavioral and social determinants of health and well-being.

Building this foundation for a modern and responsive system demands a new data mindset. Leaders can start with three practices that challenge common wisdom about analytics in health and social care.

1. Go Beyond Compliance

Health and human services agencies have traditionally looked to data as a means to meet federal compliance and operational reporting requirements. These responsibilities are regulatory by definition, and they are a foundational element of this work that will not go away. Even so, agencies can think beyond compliance when it comes to data analytics. They can check the box and think outside of it.

Breaking away from a compliance mindset opens doors to new opportunities to reinvent service delivery and build a stronger network of care in the process. Too few of the world's social services agencies are actively doing this today. Consider that just 29 percent of them use advanced analytics for measuring performance and 21 percent use it to modernize and digitize processes to meet people's technology expectations.[1] The biggest surprise is that a mere 15 percent of agencies use advanced analytics to improve service delivery and meet expectations.

2. Get Speed to Insight

Agencies that want to develop their own targeted analytics programs and get results quickly need different tools than most expect. Many decision-makers think that they must start with infrastructure. They assume the first step is to invest in data warehouses, data stores, and the hardware and software necessary to support them. This is an unnecessary heavy lift—an expensive three- to five-year project that more often than not does not yield desired results for data analytics.

This lack of results happens because while data warehouses have their place in health and human services—for compliance, reporting, and other business intelligence needs—they do not have to be the starting points for analytics initiatives. These programs do not require perfect data, or even

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By Daniel Pollack

Preserving Video-Recorded Child Sexual Abuse Investigative Interviews

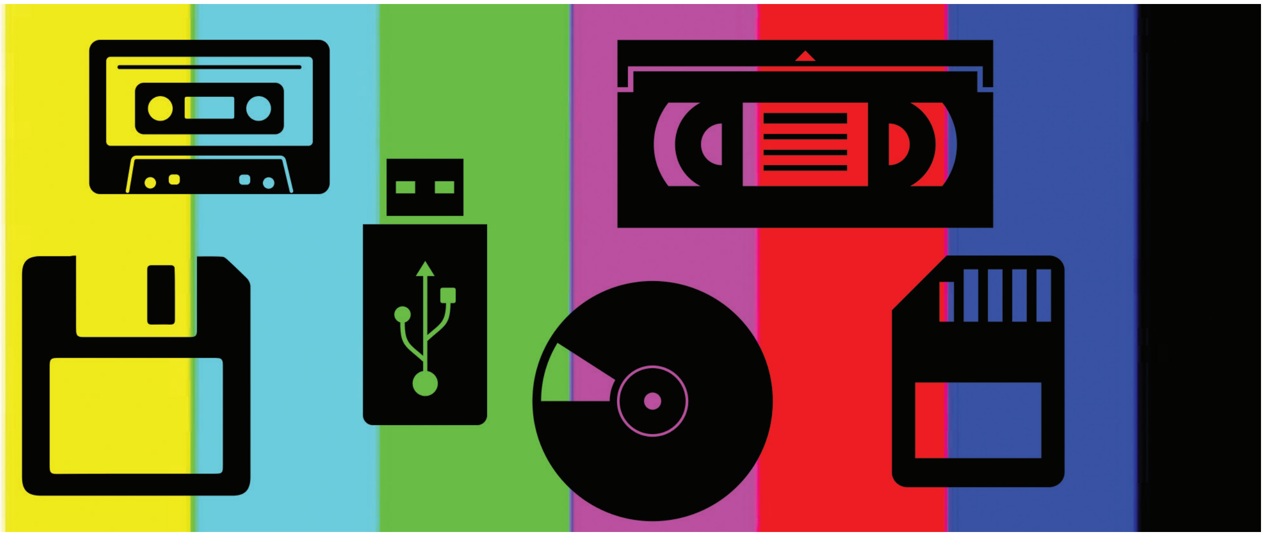

Illustration by Chris Campbell

Every video-recorded child sexual abuse investigative interview is unique and cannot be replaced if the recording is lost, damaged, or destroyed. Arguing that the failure to properly preserve video evidence was not done in bad faith may not pass legal muster. Pursuant to the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment, "criminal prosecutions must comport with prevailing notions of fundamental fairness" *California v. Trombetta,* 467 U.S. 479, 485 (1984). Simply put, if a video has not been properly preserved it may cause problems with due process later.

In many states, by law, video recording child sexual abuse investigative interviews must be preserved as evidence. For instance, the Iowa Code § 232.71B (2015) [Duties of the department upon receipt of report] provides "...19 Rules. The department shall adopt rules regarding the intake process, assessment process, assessment reports, contact with juvenile court or the county attorney, involvement with law enforcement, case record retention, and dissemination of records for both child abuse assessments and family assessments."

Similarly, South Carolina Code Ann. § 17-23-175 (2013) [Admissibility of out-of-court statement of child under twelve; determination of trustworthiness; notice to adverse party], subsection (A)(2) states: "an audio and visual recording of the statement is preserved on film, videotape, or other electronic means, except as provided in subsection (F)." Subsection (F) states: "Out-of-court statements made by a child in response to questioning during an investigative interview that is visually and auditorily recorded will always be given preference. If, however, an electronically unrecorded statement is made to a professional in his professional capacity by a child victim or witness regarding an act of sexual assault or physical abuse, the court may consider the statement in a hearing outside the presence of the jury to determine:

(1) the necessary visual and audio recording equipment was unavailable;
(2) the circumstances surrounding the making of the statement;
(3) the relationship of the professional and the child; and
(4) if the statement possesses particularized guarantees of trustworthiness."

Our surveillance society and digital environment have changed everything. Never before have we been able to record and store such vast amounts of information. The storage, maintenance, and retrieval of video-recorded interviews are crucial to ongoing child maltreatment investigations and for use in future legal forums. If they are not properly preserved, there is a risk that constitutional rights and obligations

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By Daniel Pollack

Failing to Call an Expert Witness in Criminal Child Maltreatment Cases May Be "Ineffective Assistance of Counsel"

Photograph via Sutterstock

The U.S. Constitution's Sixth Amendment states, "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense." The phrase that most of us probably cite most often is the last one, "the assistance of counsel." There are many aspects to demonstrating that an attorney has lived up to a reasonable standard of competence. The Supreme Court, in *Strickland v. Washington,* 466 U.S. 668 (1984), has held that the Sixth Amendment does not just guarantee a right to counsel—it guarantees a right to effective counsel. And, the Supreme Court has interpreted this right as extending to all "critical" stages of a criminal proceeding.

For a number of different reasons, ineffective assistance of counsel can be a factor in an alleged wrongful conviction. Examples may include an attorney's failure to call a witness, properly investigate the facts of the case, cross-examine a witness, request DNA testing, make objections to a prosecutor's arguments, acknowledge a conflict of interest, or present an expert witness on behalf of the defendant. This article briefly investigates the last circumstance.

In the child welfare legal arena, this issue may come up in child maltreatment cases. For instance, in *People of the State of Michigan v. Ackley* (2015), Leo Ackley was convicted by a jury of first-degree felony murder and first-degree child abuse following the death of his live-in girlfriend's three-year-old daughter while she was in his care. At his trial, the prosecution called five medical experts. They testified that the child had died as the result of a head injury that was caused intentionally. Ackley's attorney called no experts even though court funding for expert assistance was available and a forensic pathologist might have corroborated the possibility that the girl's injuries resulted from an accidental fall. The Michigan Supreme Court concluded that the "defense counsel's failure to engage a single expert witness to rebut the prosecution's expert testimony, or to attempt to consult an expert with the scientific training to support the defendant's theory of the case, fell below an objective standard of reasonableness, and created a reasonable probability that this error affected the outcome of the defendant's trial."

Indeed, "[c]riminal cases will arise where the only reasonable and available defense strategy requires consultation with experts or introduction of expert evidence." (*Hinton v. Alabama,* 134 S.Ct. at 1088 quoting *Harrington v. Richter,* 562 U.S. 86, 131 S.Ct. 770, 788 (2011)). When is an attorney's decision not to retain an expert witness a matter of reasonable trial strategy and tactics, and when is

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Center for Child and Family Well-Being

- **State and Local Immigration Coalition.** APHSA's Child and Family Team joined other state and local national government associations for a discussion on emerging administration actions addressing immigration and the impact on states and localities. The Coalition allows partnering organizations to "tap" into the expertise or focus area of each participating entity. Through APHSA's Task Force on Refugees and Unaccompanied Children, we are monitoring regulations (proposed and released) that affect these two distinct populations.
- **American Bar Association National Leadership Dinner.** APHSA joined the American Bar Association (ABA) 2017 National Conference for a National Partner's dinner meeting. The dinner provided an opportunity to network with national leaders connected to the child welfare system who are working on similar issues. APHSA provided a brief overview of its *Pathways* framework and supporting elements from the Theory of Change (Framing Science, the Human Services Value Curve). Most attendees represented legal entities that apply litigation and class action lawsuits as a tool for reforming child welfare systems. APHSA will engage its child welfare and health and human services attorneys' affiliates to strengthen engagement, communications, and potential partnership with these entities.

National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators

- **2017 Annual Symposium Outlines Policy and Programmatic Priorities.** On April 29 and 30, we held a joint NAPCWA/Center for Children and Family Well-Being Symposium on Setting our Strategic Priorities. The meeting was held prior to the APHSA 2017 National Health and Human Services Summit in Baltimore, MD. The meeting opened with an afternoon, half-day executive session on the child welfare legislative outlook for the 115th Congress. The group reviewed proposed changes to the Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families Programs. Additionally, attendees discussed the Family First Prevention Services Act and proposed child welfare workforce legislation, and outlined a framework for responding to legislative proposals.

The second day of the meeting provided an overview of APHSA's Theory of Change, including two presentations from Doris Tolliver, Chief of Staff at the Indiana Department of Children's Services and NAPCWA President, and Nanette Bowler, Director of the Fairfax County (VA) Department of Human Services, on how these systems are applying the Human Services Value Curve and Framing Science. For the remainder of the meeting, attendees participated in interactive activities on using a Value Curve template to outline NAPCWA's efforts across the four stages (regulative to generative) with an emphasis on the following priorities: updating the affiliate's vision and mission statement (leveraging *Pathways'* emphasis on children and families); establishing a process for building consensus on policy proposals (based on a policy review template); convening specialized workgroups to provide more in-depth review, analysis, and positioning on emerging topics; and providing peer support and field orientation to new leaders.

Yvette Sanchez-Fuentes, Assistant Director for Policy at the Aspen Institute, spoke to the group about the organization's recently released report, "Children and Families at the Center: Policy Ideas for Communities, States, and the Administration" and Candy Hill, APHSA Senior Director of Policy and Government Affairs, provided a policy update on current administration and congressional activities.

Additional information is forthcoming on ways to get involved with NAPCWA and Center initiatives.

- **Partnering with Children's Defense Fund and the ABA on Education.** For the past several months, NAPCWA has convened a workgroup of members to discuss the implementation of the provisions of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that relate to students in foster care. Earlier this year, Kathleen McNaught, Director of the ABA Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, and MaryLee Allen, Director of Policy at the Children's' Defense Fund, joined a workgroup call to answer questions about ESSA implementation. Workgroup members received technical assistance on barriers they are experiencing with implementation and agreed to host additional forums with external ESSA experts.
- **APHSA-ACF Webinar Series.** This past Spring, APHSA wrapped up a six-part webinar series, "Advancing Family Economic & Social Well-Being." The webinar series has showcased state innovation on two-generation programs, such as Tennessee's two-generation experience with comprehensive workforce development. APHSA partnered with the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) on this effort, with ACYF hosting the first four webinars and APHSA taking the lead on the fifth and sixth sessions. The six-part webinar series is available at *http://aphsa.org/content/APHSA/en/resources/PRESENTATIONS/WEBINARS/Advancing_Family_Economic_Social_Wellbeing_Webinar_Series.html*

Highlights of the 2017 APHSA National Health and Human Services Summit

Held in partnership with the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, April 30–May 3 in Baltimore, MD.

1) Roderick (Rod) Bremby, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Social Services, received the 2017 APHSA State Outstanding Member Award.
2) U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price addresses Summit attendees.
3) Opening keynote session features Simon T. Bailey, Shift Your Brilliance: Leading Amidst Uncertainty.
4) Nannette Bowler, Director of the Fairfax County (VA) Department of Family Services, receives 2017 APHSA Local Outstanding Member Award.
5) Anne Mosle (right), Vice President at the Aspen Institute and Executive Director of Ascend, at the Summit's closing session, after receiving the 2017 Jerry W. Friedman Health and Human Services Impact Award, with Tracy Wareing Evans (center), President and CEO of APHSA, and Susan Dreyfus (left), President and CEO of the Alliance.

National Association of State Child Care Administrators

In late April, the National Association of State Child Care Administrators (NASCCA) held an all-member webinar to review a set of regulations released in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule (September 2016). The NASCCA Executive Advisory Committee sponsored the webinar following the February 24, 2017 Executive Order on Regulatory Reform.

The notice establishes task forces (within each federal agency) to review regulations and to make recommendations for their repeal, replacement, or modification. The webinar polled NASCCA members on the extent to which the final rule was an accurate interpretation of the statutory language. In instances where there was misalignment, members were asked to identify a recommended action for the Office of Child Care. This webinar is part of NASCCA's ongoing work to support members in CCDF implementation.

workplace setting over time. In order to facilitate retention of knowledge, a cohort of 20–25 mid-career staff meet for two full-day seminars per month and one additional "assignment day" per month for 10 months. Although this is an extensive commitment, Data Fellows participants are not expected to complete class work outside this protected time.

The DFS Data Analytics Fellowship Academy (DAFA) was based on the Data Fellows model. As the DFS attempts to move up the Value Curve and become an "Integrative" agency, DAFA is utilizing data from across all five main DFS program areas (public assistance, child welfare, adult services, child care, and domestic and sexual violence services) in order to understand and dismantle the internal barriers that challenge our clients' ability to achieve self-sufficiency and well-being.

As the DFS attempts to move up the Value Curve and become an "Integrative" agency, DAFA is utilizing data from across all five main DFS program areas (public assistance, child welfare, adult services, child care, and domestic and sexual violence services) in order to understand and dismantle the internal barriers that challenge our clients' ability to achieve self-sufficiency and well-being.

What makes DAFA more than just another training program is the fact that the program focuses on high-priority program areas identified by agency leadership. Participants use existing client-level data and exercises based on existing real-life challenges in the selected program areas. Participants learn not only how to ask questions and analyze data, but also how to use relevant data to tell a story. There is an interim presentation (at the half-way point of the program) and a final presentation where participants present their findings and practice their presentation skills.

Our first cohort of DFS DAFA Fellows started in October 2016 by researching best practices, analyzing data from approximately 5,000 clients who were approved for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) over a two-year period, and looking at what other services these clients received from other DFS programs over the previous four years. DAFA Fellows looked at the demographics of the clients, geographic differences, family composition, and other factors in an attempt to find subsets of clients who had better outcomes or "bright spots," a concept originated in *Switch: How to Change When Change is Hard,* the popular business book by Chip Heath & Dan Heath. They suggest that focusing on what is working is a more effective way of generating change than focusing on deficits and this work is instrumental to the Data Fellows model.

As the DFS DAFA Fellows prepared for their April 2017 interim presentations, several potential areas for further exploration had been identified:

- Children five years old and younger are overrepresented in the TANF cohort; we should explore what other services are needed by these families and whether they are receiving them.
- Several communities have high concentrations of TANF clients and we should look into what is different about these communities.
- TANF clients frequently also receive the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, and Child Care subsidies, and are also more likely to be served by Child Protective Services. We need to explore the process of how TANF clients use these other programs within the DFS.

Following the interim presentations, the fellows will conduct qualitative analysis (reviewing case records and conducting interviews and/or focus groups with clients or staff) and a business process mapping exercise to identify areas for improvement. In August 2017, DAFA Fellows will make their final presentations and make recommendations for future areas of investigation. A second DAFA cohort will begin in October 2017.

By next year, DFS intends to begin training future DAFA facilitators with the goal of eventually being able to deliver the program without outside assistance from Public Catalyst. In fact, it is our expectation that our future DAFA facilitators are probably in our classes right now. As a part of DFS' efforts to become a data-informed agency, DFS is establishing a Data Analytics Unit with the mission to achieve an agency culture of data-informed decision-making at all levels to address the root causes of our customers' needs. The unit will run the DAFA program as well as conduct research projects and issue research and evaluation reports on DFS initiatives. With a cadre of annual DAFA graduates at all levels of the organization asking the right questions in their day-to-day work and a Data Analytics Unit to help study the big questions, DFS will begin to get a clearer idea about which assumptions have been "blocking the light" so we can accelerate our growth into a truly integrative agency.

Reference Note

1. See *http://madefutureproof.com/analytics*

Ronald Chavarro *is the Deputy Director of the Fairfax County (Virginia) Department of Family Services.*

John Ruthinoski *is a Management Analyst with the Fairfax County (Virginia) Department of Family Services.*

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- Establishing formal client referral mechanisms between DTA and the OSCC;
- Working jointly to address key challenges for TAFDC and SNAP clients to participate in OSCCs activities such as transportation and child care; and
- Working jointly to ensure that TAFDC and SNAP clients receive tailored and appropriate job readiness, job matching, coaching, and employment supports.

Best Practice Highlight: Bristol County Career Center

The Fall River One-Stop Career Center is the proving ground for this new partnership. The pilot program provided intensive work preparation and job search activities to a select group of DTA recipients. The goal of the pilot program was to assist DTA recipients with securing full-time gainful employment by leveraging the staff and services of each agency participating in the program. The focus was to educate, encourage, and empower each participant with the knowledge and ability to find and secure employment, thus transitioning them from public assistance to economic independency.

A structured 12-week, six-hour-per-day curriculum was developed. The program combined eight weeks of keyboarding, Career Ready 101, targeted job search, Microsoft Office computer lab or work component followed by four weeks of post-employment supports. There were several notable successful and positive outcomes from the pilot program. Out of the 13 participants, nine obtained employment and one went on to enroll at Bristol Community College to further her education.

The pilot program was instrumental in changing the mindset of at least one participant as noted in her journal entry:

"One of the things I love about the program and the career center in general is that when we leave we can always come back! We can contact the staff for help; if we lose our job they will still help us with job leads and we can come back to give advice to future groups. It makes me feel like I have a backup plan if things go wrong and I lose my job or am unhappy; I can come here and find a way to better my situation instead of going back to DTA."

The implementation of the WIOA plan also spurred a renewed effort to examine the challenges families encounter as they attempt to gain additional skills and education to increase wages and move toward self-sustaining employment.

Learn to Earn: Recognizing the Unique Challenge for Public Assistance Customers

The implementation of the WIOA plan also spurred a renewed effort to examine the challenges families encounter as they attempt to gain additional skills and education to increase wages and move toward self-sustaining employment. While many clients who receive public benefits and supports are employed, they often work part time or at low-wage jobs. These jobs often keep clients at or below the poverty limit without career pathways and without the possibility for wage growth and advancement. Individuals who are working and receiving public benefits (TANF, SNAP, child care, housing, MassHealth, etc.) can face significant consequences for their household resources (known as the "cliff effect") if they accept a raise or promotion, agree to work more hours, or seek a higher paying job.

As additional support in the implementation of the WIOA state plan, Governor Baker recently proposed the Learn to Earn Initiative (LTE). The LTE is a coordinated, comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals with the support and skills they need to obtain and sustain employment in industries where employers have the greatest needs.

The LTE is a partnership formed by the governor among the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and several of its agencies (DTA, MRC, MCB, EOEA, etc.) with the EOLWD and the Executive Departments of Education and Housing and Economic Development. If adopted by the legislature, this initiative will serve populations with historically higher than average rates of unemployment, with a focus on reducing employment barriers for individuals and families in public housing, as well as those receiving TANF and SNAP.

Conclusion

Looking forward, EOLWD, DCS, EOHHS, and DTA are energized about the partnerships developed through the combined WIOA state plan. Realizing that one state agency cannot be all things to all clients compels these agencies to examine effective service delivery models, decide who does what best, and reallocate resources to meet the demand of our state's employers. Engaging clients in this holistic way —across key partner agencies—will not only benefit the Massachusetts economy but provides the best opportunity in a generation to help our shared clients set and achieve meaningful goals and find a true route out of poverty for themselves and their children.

CASE MANAGEMENT continued from page 22

a desk or on your phone right before a home visit. Software that applies new findings in neuroscience and knowledge of how people heal and develop is vital. Think of Us is currently exploring how to create software that can help youth heal, develop, and thrive as healthy adults.

Think of Us currently partners with foster care agencies and their Independent Living Programs (ILPs), cohorts of nonprofits, and departments of social services to improve outcomes of young people transitioning out of foster care by providing a web and mobile platform that influences ILPs, nonprofits, and child welfare systems to help overcome three main barriers—becoming more efficient, improving outcomes, and becoming more data-driven.

The platform is a life-coaching web and mobile platform that empowers youth to build personal support systems. Youth create their own advisory boards as they transition out of foster care and into the workforce and/or post-secondary education, while also providing valuable support that traditional families might otherwise provide. The platform provides young people with interactive content,

The power of conversation, however, is the most powerful thing we have. Starting uncomfortable conversations and making it known that severely outdated case management systems are unacceptable can invoke change.

self-coaching activities, and planning tools to help identify and set goals for their treatment plan, also providing a framework to achieve the goals they have set. Young adults will gain information and insight needed to overcome everyday challenges, such as renting an apartment or reconnecting with biological family.

Caseworkers can use the platform to respond to requests and support youth through their goals and task management. Workers and higher-level staff can see advanced analytics of their current youth caseload's goals and challenges. The platform provides real-time data about youth's current needs so that workers can focus on making data-driven decisions as they coach and support youth.

Many people do not know how the case management system works. I know I did not when I was 13. However, if I was told build a skyscraper with no electricity and no mechanics, it would seem like I was set up for failure because I was not provided with the adequate tools needed to succeed. This happens every single day to youth of all ages through case management, yet we are complacent. The power of conversation, however, is the most powerful thing we have. Starting uncomfortable conversations and making it known that severely outdated case management systems are unacceptable can invoke change. Updated case management systems and advanced technology will save caseworkers time, increase efficiency, increase compliance rates, offer additional reporting tools, and result in better outcomes for youth. If you had tools to help youth build skyscrapers, why wouldn't you help?

***Sixto Cancel** is the CEO of Think Of Us.*

INTERVIEWS continued from page 24

will be impaired. Consequently, human services agencies are facing hard questions with crucial legal implications:

- Video recordings, in whatever format, are prone to degradation. Such factors as corrosion, oxidation, adverse chemical reactions, and physical damage are all possible culprits. Knowing this, are human services agencies committed to properly preserving this crucial evidence?
- Are agency policies considering the effects of hardware and software obsolescence?
- Original video recordings should be retained in an unedited format. Are agencies ensuring that all future copies of the edited video interview are really exact duplicates?
- Are security, confidentiality, and accessibility ensured?
- Is there sufficient redundancy?
- What costs are involved?
- Appropriate retention of video files, be they digital or videotape, must take into account factors such as the frequency of access that is required, the technology infrastructure of the recordings, and the size of the collection. The Library of Congress's File Format Sustainability[1] criteria provides factors for evaluating a given format. Are there written agency policies that address these issues?
- Can video recordings be shown to any employee or just those who have a specific need to see them?
- Are there written procedures regarding the circumstances under which these videos may be released? Exactly whose approval is necessary?

The right answers to these questions may be the keys to justice—for an alleged perpetrator and for a child.

Reference Note

1. See *http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/formats*

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DATA MINDSET continued from page 23

perfect data culture, to deliver meaningful results quickly.

With advances in data tools and platforms, agencies can start small, using advanced techniques, and get results faster. So instead of putting time and money immediately into infrastructure, agencies should focus on the data they have, using fast, innovative methods to extract value from it. The key is to use a business lens, identifying a specific business problem or question to address and then "work backwards" to determine the data insight needed to solve it.

With this narrow focus, agencies can apply methods like rapid prototyping or rapid-cycle evaluation to reduce delivery time and improve services faster. These methods take weeks, not years, speeding insight to action. They are also highly adaptive, giving agencies newfound freedom to take risks and experiment with analytics.

3. Evolve to Ecosystems

With a new data mindset that expands beyond compliance and the tools and methods to uncover analytics insight faster, health and human services can pursue a new level of data sharing to drive outcomes. This goes beyond occasional, ad-hoc information exchanges between specific partners for specific purposes.

Thanks to analytics approaches and digital platforms, rich data insight from multiple sources can be continuously and proactively shared across an entire ecosystem of organizations across sectors to improve levels of service and care. Ecosystems connect disparate organizations in a network of care to address the whole person through complementary strengths and resources.

Connected by shared data, ecosystems are the future of health and human services delivery. Policymakers acknowledge the "network effect" of ecosystems to multiply outcomes. The OMB A-87 Cost Allocation Exception offers funding incentives that encourage states to build enterprise ecosystem data management approaches that make data available across systems.

Sharing data across an ecosystem is not without challenges for most agencies. Even with good intentions there may be legislative, process, cultural, and confidentiality barriers. Making progress will take adaptive leadership approaches and creative strategies. A critical part of this will be educating people about the value of sharing their data, designing methods of incorporating data into day-to-day operations, and prioritizing security and confidentiality measures.

The People Doing the Work Need Data Insight

Health and human services agencies have the potential to access endless data about the people they serve and the programs they develop. Yet data are just data unless agencies know how to act on them. This demands a steady focus on outcomes, an ability to use technology rather than be limited by it, and a willingness to connect with stakeholders in new ways. The real game changer in converting analytics into outcomes in health and human services? Getting data quickly into the hands of the people doing the work.

Reference Note

1. Accenture Public Service Emerging Technologies Research, June 2016

Debora Morris *is the Managing Director of Growth and Strategy at Accenture.*

Joseph Fiorentino *is the Managing Director of Health and Public Service at Accenture.*

PRESIDENT'S MEMO continued from page 3

and systems—drove this point home. While I cannot speak for others in the audience, I found myself reflecting deeply, both personally and professionally, on her call to action for this nation. She spoke of the importance of creating a new American dream—a new vision of what we will be as a nation. We cannot simply modify the old vision, not when it is founded on a flawed premise of human value. Dr. Christopher notes that "it is not enough to have cathartic conversations of the horrors" endured by communities of color in this nation—we must create the political will to move into something new for all of us. She spoke of "expanding our view" (what we might refer to in our framing work as "widening the lens") to tell the stories of the survivors and the "thrivers." In our zest to use data more effectively, she also cautions us to be careful because embedded in that big data is the legacy of our history.

All of these points are at the heart of getting to the generative state of the Value Curve. At the generative level, root-cause analysis is done at the population level and requires us to understand not only our own communities, but the ways in which our public- and social-serving systems have been shaped by our history. While the journey is not an easy one, it is one we can travel together. At APHSA, we look forward to continuing on that journey with you.

Note: if you missed Dr. Christopher's remarks, video recordings of the 2017 National Summit general sessions will be available at *http://aphsa.org* by early summer). Also, see Association News on page 26 for more from the 2017 National Summit.

Tracy Wareing Evans

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upon teaming, project responsibility, quality of co-workers, recognition, and development reputation. This would be a win-win in terms of both talent retention for both groups and improving agency performance. Astute organizations also focus on leadership succession planning, and formal mentoring can help support staff who may be ready for the next step up.

We also know that of the four general categories in this model, the compensation and benefits category is the most highly correlated to staff retention. But the single most important factor for highly valued staff is the quality of their supervision. Since compensation and incentive programs can be both expensive and tricky as far as their impact on performance and motivation, and since quality supervision serves your agency in many ways besides staff retention, this is an important finding to consider.

MOVING FORWARD

So how would one move forward systematically in using this model and research? Here are 10 specific steps (summarized in the list on the right) we suggest you follow in developing your recruitment and retention game plan:

The **first step** is to determine the skills and capabilities you need to drive your agency's strategy. Many agencies have developed job descriptions and required competencies that connect to new hire selection criteria. It is critical to align staffing requirements to strategic priorities and initiatives so they can be effectively advanced.

The **second step** is to identify each source of talent that likely possesses these skills and capabilities, such as universities and other organizations. This ensures later monitoring and adjustment of your talent sources, as it is not unusual to discover that one popular source misses the mark and another less traditional source exceeds expectations.

The **third step** is to identify the most important retention factors from the perspective of the talent you want to hire. You can test your assumptions through general research scans like the one we have discussed about millennials, but you can also identify and test them through your interview process, through ongoing staff climate surveys, and in speaking with campus placement offices, adjusting your assumptions accordingly.

The **fourth step** is to determine who you are competing against for the talent you need. If the skills and capabilities you need are more general than industry specific, or you decide to develop technical skills yourself post-hire, then your true competition for talent is most likely in other industries or fields.

And the **fifth step** in developing and implementing your game plan is to land on the subset of retention factors for which your agency can stand out from your "competition." This may require some further assessment of what they offer, and job candidates or staff who have worked for them may have helpful insights to share. Remember, you do not have to be all things to all people, but rather stand out from your competition in a few important ways.

The **sixth step** is to determine what "push factors" you might have today, and how many you have. While not being able to stand out on everything, your agency should try to limit the number of present push factors. This step requires a candid, open assessment of how well you are creating a work environment that attracts needed talent.

The **seventh step** is to actually articulate your brand and clearly convey it in your recruiting and selection activities. Your brand consists of key messages and examples that illustrate those factors for which your agency stands out. Hawaii's Department of Human Services uses Ohana Nui—One Big Family—to describe how it both serves people and operates as a workplace.

The **next two steps** shift the focus from external communication and reinforcement to more internal efforts. To truly live your talent brand, you are likely to be designing or improving upon the policies, programs, and practices you use to run your agency and support your staff. As with prospective and new hires, current staff should understand and appreciate what stands out about your agency as a desirable place to work. They are your best "marketing force" in talking up your agency to prospective and new hires. Then you need to determine what you may need to change or improve about your current organizational practices to live your brand. For each of the general drivers in focus, you need to spell out "what it would look like" if you were an attractive employer. From there you can assess your current strengths, gap areas, the reasons for your gaps, and what you would like to do to close them and "live your talent brand."

The **tenth and final step** in this approach is to monitor the impact of your efforts on retention, and whether or not your assumptions are holding up about the talent you need, where to find it, what they want in an employer, and how you can stand out. Since monitoring leads to adjusting the earlier steps of your game plan, it forms a cycle for the continuous improvement of your talent brand and its impact. Monitoring also entails comparing what turnover is costing you to what you are investing in your game plan. The costs of your branding and retention initiatives do

Strategic Retention/ Answer & Act:

1. What workforce skills and capabilities do we need?
2. Where will we find talent who possess these?
3. Which factors are most important to them?
4. Who are we competing against?
5. Which of the factors can we use to differentiate ourselves?
6. How do we limit our "push factors"?
7. What is our talent brand?
8. How are we communicating and reinforcing our brand?
9. What do we need to improve upon to live our brand?
10. How will we monitor our retention strategy?

not have to be high—staff recognition and role clarity come to mind as examples. And many of the changes you might make are things you would want to improve anyway since they result in improving the performance and reputation of your agency.

There are several ways that leaders can begin to change the trajectory of hiring and retaining their staff. First, engaging your workforce in a periodic organizational assessment—asking questions about the climate and culture, supervision, job satisfaction, agency support, and leadership reinforces a few of the steps outlined above. Leaders must be willing to accept this type of feedback, take on the challenges of improvement, and self-reflect on their own behaviors that might contribute to the health of their organization.

Utilizing a competency-based screening, interviewing, and hiring process can also help organizations select candidates who exhibit the competencies important to the organization and human services work. A multi-tiered process might include: a realistic job preview video or on-site experience (if possible); a scored competency-based interview that involves multiple interviewers; an experiential exercise; and a written exercise utilizing the agency's current technology. By hiring based on competencies and real-world fit, organizations begin to understand the characteristics of staff that are well matched with the job and who stay in the organizational and work setting. Factor-based analytics can then be utilized to help leaders better understand any number of factors related to their workforce, allowing them to proactively recruit and prevent turnover.

Utilizing stay interviews with new and current staff provides information and insight into what is going on in the organization in real time. Stay interviews occur at the 30-, 60-, and 90-day and 6-month and 12-month mark. Stay interviews are done by supervisors, managers, administrators, and sometimes directors, to solicit information that informs what the strengths of the organization are, push factors for that person, and ideas for solutions. This not only engages newer staff and indicates that leaders care about them beyond the point of hire, but allows them input on issues that directly affect their job when their fresh perspective is balanced by their emerging experiences.

CLOSING

Each of our organizations has a "brand" that lives in the hearts and minds of our employees. Dilbert cartoons and websites like Glassdoor.com demonstrate that our brands, when left to their own devices, can be comical or worse. But the natural attributes of our industry may line up pretty well with the desires of our target talent, so it is a shame that we struggle with high, unwanted turnover or to attract the talent we need. The good news is that by "moving upstream" we can make significant improvements, with reasonable cost and effort, with a high payoff not only on staff retention but on our agencies overall.

*APHSA has created a tool that defines each of these retention drivers, accessible by contacting Emily Campbell, Bryan Grove, or Jennifer Kerr at APHSA.

Reference Note

1. Flower, C., McDonald, J. & Sumski, M. (2005). Review of turnover in Milwaukee county private agency child welfare ongoing case management staff. Retrieved from *http://www.uh.edu/socialwork/_docs/cwep/national-iv-e/turnoverstudy.pdf*

staff spotlight

Name: Bryan Grove

Title: Organizational Effectiveness Consultant

Time at APHSA: 1 year

Life Before APHSA: Prior to joining APHSA, I lived in Mississippi and worked at the state Department of Human Services as a program director for Early Childhood Care and Development with the child care subsidy program. I also served as an organizational effectiveness facilitator for the agency division directors and for the agency leadership development program. Originally from Washington State, I came to human services with a background in international and local community development.

I studied Sustainable Community Development at the University of Washington honors college. A portion of the degree provided a year of practical experience focusing on empowerment and community development in rural Morocco after a 2004 earthquake. I moved to Jackson, MS, in 2008 as a consultant to facilitate the creation of a multi-ethnic college housing and mentoring community for the John and Vera Mae Perkins Foundation for Reconciliation and Development near Jackson State University. While involved in this work, I completed a master's degree in Urban Planning at Jackson State University with an emphasis on community development and housing and sought to apply these principles of sustainable community development within positions in state and local government.

What I Can Do for Our Members: Our Organizational Effectiveness (OE) practice serves to help our members become more effective and efficient by helping them focus on addressing root causes affecting organizational and community well-being. Together with a member and a small team from the member organization, we start with an area of need or an immediate priority. Then we focus on building the internal capacity of staff and organizational system to identify where to go, honestly assess where we are, and then initiate a process of planning, implementing, and monitoring progress. The Human Services Value Curve (HSVC) is an important component in this process as it helps to give a framework for better understanding where we are and where we want to go. The OE practice empowers an organization or community to progress up the Value Curve.

Priorities at APHSA: During my first year with APHSA, I've worked primarily with HSVC translation, facilitating deep-dive assessments of local systems of care seeking to move vulnerable populations upstream in integration of health and human services to improve outcomes and save health costs downstream, and evaluation of the impact of the Affordable Care Act on the level of integration between Medicaid and SNAP programs in six states across the United States.

Best Way to Reach Me: Either via email at *bgrove@aphsa.org* or by phone at (202) 821-3013.

When Not Working: My wife Mallory and I currently live in Grand Rapids, MI, where Mallory is a resident psychiatrist. I enjoy international travel, learning languages, extreme sports, running, college football, building bridges across cultural divides, and spending time with my wife.

Motto to Live By: In our divided world, some ancient wisdom seems apropos: Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

EXPERT WITNESS continued from page 25

it evidence of ineffective assistance of counsel, resulting in a substantial likelihood of a miscarriage of justice? In reviewing a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel for failure to retain an expert witness, an appellate court must evaluate and determine whether the attorney's decision was within the range of competence demanded of attorneys in similar criminal cases. The reviewing court should avoid the "distorting effects of hindsight" and "judge the reasonableness of counsel's challenged conduct on the facts of the particular case, viewed as of the time of counsel's conduct" (*Strickland,* 466 U.S. at 689-90). As the U.S. Supreme Court has said, sometimes "a single, serious error may support a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel." (*Kimmelman v Morrison,* 477 US 365, 383 (1986)).

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PRACTICE continued from page 12

neighborhood might be completely different than those obtained in a rural Louisiana town, even if the same steps and procedures are followed in both locations. The greater the program's complexity, the more potential points of failure there are in replication.

3. After considering the variables, ***be faithful to the intended design.*** Outcomes can be dramatically altered by the quality of implementation. The elements and processes that are essential to success must be adhered to with the knowledge that adjustments can be made later if they are warranted. Budget cuts frequently result in cuts to program oversight and support, dragging down performance. Budgets should include funding for initial and ongoing support and monitoring with time for reflection on how results may have varied from expectations and, even better, a hypothesis about why!
4. ***Keep excellent field notes*** about your assumptions, inputs, and process. Understanding why results vary begins with excellent documentation. With proper notes, you can review your results and consider how decision points and assumptions made along the way may have affected the results. Remember, if you modify some element of the practice, your results may differ, but they very well may also improve upon the original. If your results diverge from the original, it will be important for the global body of policymakers to understand why and how. It is critical for you to document what you may have changed, what was different from the EBP standard, and what decisions you make along the way. In time, and with multiple replication efforts, the field can measure various results and seek causal and correlative factors contributing to the variation. Without notes on process, assumptions, environment, and decisions, we are left to trust often faulty memories.

While the federal government is taking the lead, EBP should be spread across the states and municipalities as well. However, we must learn from researchers in other domains, and policymakers should approach replication of EBPs as scientists.

5. Hold ***data-driven performance meetings*** with a clear focus on opportunities for improvement, obstacles to success, and the results—increased on-time performance, a lower homelessness rate, or any other policy objective. Scheduling these meetings on a regular basis will enable agencies to discuss outcomes, adjust, and keep managers accountable for the results being produced.
6. To make informed decisions, policymakers should rely on verifiable data and analysis demonstrating the effectiveness of programs, not mere compliance.[5] Producing ***a report card on outcomes*** in a user-friendly, easy-to-understand format can aid those with budgetary authority in deciding where to allocate scarce resources and help make difficult choices when times are tough. Regularly auditing data will ensure that the systems are being followed and the results are trustworthy.

The movement toward EBP is something to applaud, regardless of politics. As Speaker Ryan said, we need to "change government's old ways of thinking and make better use of the data we get so that we can make more of a difference in people's lives." His coauthor, Senator Murray, expressed hope that the trend would continue to grow. She said at the signing, "We all agree that the government we have should work as well as possible, so I hope to further build on this foundation with continued bipartisan work to help improve the effectiveness of the federal government." In a time of partisan gridlock, this seems like something we can all agree upon.

While the federal government is taking the lead, EBP should be spread across the states and municipalities as well. However, we must learn from researchers in other domains, and policymakers should approach replication of EBPs as scientists. Your notes and results may have an important impact on the field of public policy and practice for generations.

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5. "Here's Something We Can All Agree On: Agencies Need to Deliver Results," by Andrew R. Feldman and Seth Harris, March 15, 2017, *https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/heres-something-we-can-all-agree-on-agencies-need-to-deliver-results/*

our do'ers profile

In Our Do'ers Profile, we highlight some of the hardworking and talented individuals in public human services. This issue features Brent Earnest, Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Human Services Department.

Name: Brent Earnest

Title: Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Human Services Department

Years of Service: Almost two and a half years in my current position. The New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) manages Medicaid, Behavioral Health, Child Support Enforcement, SNAP, TANF, LIHEAP, and other public assistance programs, as well as eligibility services for the programs. I served previously as Deputy Secretary for four years, as an analyst for the Legislative Finance Committee in the state legislature for more than five years, and spent time in Washington, D.C. working at the Brookings Institution and for U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman.

Rewards of the Job: Knowing that every day we are helping families get the health care they need, put food on the table, get a child support payment, and build skills to get a job. But, also that we are creating more sustainable programs that better meet people's needs. Ultimately, we are helping people get back on the path to self-sufficiency. Our staff, working in offices throughout the state, is dedicated to our mission and want to see their communities and neighbors thrive.

Accomplishments Most Proud Of: Since 2014, we have helped more than 260,000 New Mexicans get health care coverage, many for the first time, through a more patient-centered, integrated Medicaid program known as Centennial Care. More people are accessing behavioral health and preventive services, and per person costs are declining. With an emphasis on aligning payers, providers, and enrollees around four key goals, the program is transforming health care in New Mexico. Centennial Care recognizes the importance of treating the whole person—mind and body—in a more holistic system that puts behavioral health on par with physical health services. There is much work to do, but these reforms put the patient first, while empowering and encouraging individuals to be more active in their health care. More providers are receiving value-based payments, which reimburse for better outcomes, not just the services that are delivered. The four managed care organizations, with responsibility for the full continuum of care, are better coordinating care. Community health workers and peer support specialists are more directly involved in the delivery of Medicaid services; helping the state address a shortage of health care professionals. And the results are encouraging: per person spending in year three was 1.5 percent lower than the first year, despite regional and national health care inflation. Along the way, we restructured hospital payments to directly address uncompensated care and reward better performance, replaced a 20-plus year-old eligibility system, and initiated a broader reform for the delivery of health and human services. It has been a busy few years, and I am consistently impressed by the capability and capacity of our department's employees and leaders.

Future Challenges for the Delivery of Public Human Services: Two come to mind. First, delivering health care—particularly behavioral health care—is challenged by workforce shortages. In New Mexico, where much of the state is designated as a workforce shortage area, we see difficulty in placing providers at almost all professional levels. While various initiatives show promise, such as investing in paraprofessionals like community health workers and peer support workers or technological tools like telehealth, the pipeline of professionals is not full enough to meet the need. Second, from a system perspective, human services programs have to continue to integrate service delivery and data systems. The programs have grown up and become entrenched in structures dictated by their regulatory and funding streams. The profession needs to break away from these siloed delivery systems to more directly benefit people who need assistance. There is promise here, too. Better integrated data systems, with improved analytics, should help decision-makers invest in programs that drive better outcomes—not just in one program but across the spectrum of government services.

Little Known Facts About Me: I started college studying architecture and enjoyed the problem-solving and creative aspects of the profession. When traveling, I still like to find the interesting or significant building.

Outside Interests: Seeking out and learning something new, be it cooking a new dish or, when I find time, reading a new history book. Tennis is my sport of choice, and I enjoy the outdoors—hiking, camping, skiing, or lately, watching my kids' soccer matches.


MODERNIZING
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