

Rob Waters (RW): What advice would you give to other State Medicaid Agencies trying to enhance Health IT and Data Analytics?

Smith: Understand where your starting point is, meaning be realistic where your organization currently sits with Health IT and Data Analytics. Perform an assessment of your architecture documentation, data flow diagrams, and current data quality. Enhancement projects have a greater chance of success if you have a realistic understanding of your starting point.

McNaughton: Develop overall vision that focuses on the specific needs and goals of your Medicaid Program. Look beyond the Medicaid Enterprise to consider interoperability and analytics with data from other state agencies to improve outcomes, whole-person care, health equity and cost. Evaluate current and future regulations with a view towards the state's future needs, in addition to meeting the intent of the regulation. Team with the best mix of partners and solution vendors to help achieve the vision and ensure operational success.

McDermott: Invest in your staff. Make sure that you have the necessary training and resources to take full advantage of the enhancements being made. Technology is constantly evolving, so it is important to engage with professionals who can help you navigate through these changes.

RW: What are the top challenges that State Medicaid Agencies face when incorporating Health IT and Data Analytics into Medicaid Program operations? What are some strategies for overcoming these challenges?

Smith: Challenges include having sufficiently trained staff to appropriately utilize the data in forward thinking ways that benefit the Medicaid Program. Medicaid Agencies must invest in retaining analytic staff, which may include vendor support.

McNaughton: Stakeholder adoption, multi-vendor coordination, and maintaining industry vision are three areas we have seen challenges.

- **Stakeholder Adoption** – We can build interoperability, Health IT, and analytics solutions, but if not used to their potential, we cannot fully realize the benefits. Strong organizational change management and communication strategies should be used throughout the life of the project and operations to promote training and use.
- **Multi-Vendor Coordination** – With increased modularity and interoperability, multi-vendor coordination becomes increasingly important. A strong State Medicaid PMO should be in place to help with coordination, planning and process standardization across the enterprise.
- **Maintaining Industry Vision** – It is important to maintain the big-picture view, understanding industry trends, and initiatives in other states. Strong advisory and collaboration with other States/Industry Groups can help inform state strategy and vision.

McDermott: Common challenges are interoperability issues (when different systems do not communicate properly), funding (ensuring there is a budget identified specifically for technology changes), and privacy and security (making sure that sure that patient's information is always protected). Common strategies to address the challenges are developing standard interfaces (interoperability issues), utilizing enhanced Federal

Financial Participation to help offset costs (funding) and creating comprehensive Data Sharing Agreements with data sources (privacy and security). Focus on evaluating client privacy (consent process) to ensure data is not disclosed in an inappropriate manner.

RW: Can you share any success stories you have where Health IT or Data Analytics positively impacted a Medicaid Program?

Smith: States that have implemented All Payer Claims Database solutions create an environment that contains both commercial and Medicaid claims data. This allows for the identification of geographical areas where patients are unable to receive treatment or must travel long distances. By understanding the medical needs in a particular area, Medicaid can provide incentives or support initiatives to fill the identified gaps.

McNaughton: Implementation of Medicaid interoperability projects and state mobile apps has:

- **Improved Client Support and Communication:** A mobile app is now available to support clients in receiving access to their health and claims information, provider directory, electronic identification cards, agency communications and more.
- **Improved Client Care for Providers:** Clients can more easily share certain prior health data with their providers through mobile apps, creating a comprehensive patient view, improving patient outcomes and reducing Provider and Agency costs.
- **Improved Interoperability for the Medicaid Enterprise:** A framework has been created to promote exchange of data between the Medicaid Enterprise, Mobile Apps for clients and the State Health Information Exchange (HIE). Interoperability platforms create the foundation for expansion with future rulemaking and agency vision.

RW: How do you see Health IT and Data Analytics evolving and what opportunities might they bring for a Medicaid Program?

Smith: With increased interoperability bringing together clinical and payment information, Medicaid Programs have an opportunity to look beyond the medical treatments and identify services that further support the population and potentially reduce the need for medical treatments.

McNaughton: Medicaid interoperability will continue to expand, not only between patients, providers, and other payers, but with other government agencies and HIEs as well. This interoperability will allow for new data to enter our Medicaid Management Information Systems (MMIS), including social determinants of health. This, in turn, will provide new opportunities for analytics to improve outcomes, promote whole person care, address health equity and reduce costs.

RW: What role does artificial intelligence (AI) / machine learning (ML) play in Medicaid?

Smith: AI/ML can assist Medicaid agencies in evaluating treatments and cost to help evaluate innovative ways to provide support to Medicaid members. As more clinical and payment

data is received by the Medicaid Program, more robust models can be created. These models can identify supporting services that can help prevent the need for expensive medical treatments, ultimately improving the overall health and well-being of Medicaid members.

McNaughton: With the expansion of Medicaid interoperability with other agencies and stakeholders, data exchange and storage are on the rise. AI/ML will be used to power insights from this big data to assist leadership and analysts with business decisions and program policy.

McDermott: AI/ML can unlock the power to assess risk in care, highlight impacted populations, detect fraud and abuse, and measure outcomes and metrics. However, to best utilize the benefits of AI, data needs to be accurate, relevant, and representative. Data analytics need to be up-to-date and mirror the expected population affected to ensure accurate and reliable results that can truly benefit Medicaid Programs.

complex projects. In addition, he leads NTT DATA's System Integration and Interoperability practice and hosts NTT DATA's State Forum for Interoperability and Cloud Migration collaborating with 20+ State Medicaid Agencies to share insights and lessons learned.



Jeff McDermott

Jeff McDermott is an Information Technology Lead Managing Consultant with NTT DATA Government Consulting and Advisory (GCA). He currently supports the states of Arizona, Arkansas, and Hawaii. Jeff has more than 25 years of experience providing solutions to business problems in the Information Technology industry. Throughout his career, he has provided strategic direction, implementation, and operations leadership for many large complex projects. In addition, he has provided program management of solutions for healthcare, state government, and local government clients.



Kimberly Smith

Kimberly Smith is a Business Consulting Director with NTT DATA Government Consulting and Advisory (GCA), currently supporting Arizona's and Hawaii's State Medicaid Agencies to modernize their Medicaid Enterprise Systems and establish robust health data analytics. Kimberly has more than 25 years of experience providing solutions to business problems in the Information Technology industry. Throughout her career, she has provided strategic direction, implementation, and operations leadership for many large, complex projects. In addition, she has provided data governance and management of solutions for healthcare, state government, and local government clients.



Kristopher McNaughton

Kris McNaughton is an Information Technology Senior Managing Consultant with NTT DATA Government Consulting and Advisory (GCA). He currently supports Arkansas's Medicaid Enterprise. Kris has more than 23 years of experience providing solutions to business problems in the Information Technology industry. Throughout his career, he has provided consulting, architect, technical leadership, and project management for many large,