State of Connecticut-Office of Policy & Management in Consultation with the Nonprofit Liaison to the Governor

A Report on the Feasibility of Establishing a Statewide Health and Human Services Data Warehouse

12/30/2011

OVERVIEW

Public Act 11-238, *"An Act Concerning Recommendations from the Commission on Nonprofit Health and Human Services Relating to Purchase of Service Contracts"* called for the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), in consultation with the Governor's Nonprofit Liaison, to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a state-wide data warehouse for the storage of public and private health and human services data to enable each state agency to track data trends, operate more efficiently and make recommendations for policy changes.

The Public Act also required the Secretary of OPM to submit a report on the study to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services and government administration and elections no later than January 1, 2012.

The concept of a "Data Warehouse" as envisioned by the Commission on Nonprofit Health and Human Services appeared to include three components.

1. **Web Based Document Vault -** to allow nonprofit organizations to post documents required by state agencies when executing purchase of service (POS) contracts. When a nonprofit organization provides multiple services under separate contracts to a state agency or provides services for more than one agency, the nonprofit must submit duplicate paperwork to comply with the requirements of contract execution. By creating a vault where required paper work such as OPM Ethics Forms, Non-discrimination Certifications, Board Resolutions, etc ., can be posted for all agencies and their staff to view there is no need to repeatedly submit the paperwork for each contract or agency the nonprofit is associated with.

2. **Electronic Procurement Processing** - currently most procurement processing takes place on paper. Proposals, forms and other paperwork are rarely handled electronically. Much time is lost in the procurement process in transmitting documents by inter-office and U.S. mail.

3. **Data Collection/Storage** - Decision making regarding health and human services for Connecticut's residents can best be made when data is available to state agencies and non-profits to inform policy making, strategic planning, inter-agency collaboration, program evaluation, need for services and service improvement.

WEB BASED DOCUMENT VAULT

Throughout the summer and fall of 2011, OPM and the Governor's Nonprofit Liaison explored a number of possibilities for the provision of a document vault to be used by nonprofit providers to post key contracting documents that could then be viewed by any state agency with which they contracted.

Initially, discussions took place with the University of Connecticut Nonprofit Leadership Program who had been awarded a contract to develop the Connecticut Nonprofit Policy and Capacity Database by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center in support of the work of the Connecticut Data Partnership. Significant funding for this project was provided by the Connecticut Health and Educational Health Facilities Authority.   It was determined that a document vault would be able to be a component of this project; however, concern was raised by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) regarding issues of ownership, accountability and security that would need to be addressed if a non-state entity were to host the vault as the database is contained on a server maintained by the Urban Institute.

At the same time, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), as part of an effort led by Governor Dannel P. Malloy to make doing business with the state easier and more efficient and to comply with Public Act (PA) 11-229, launched changes to their contracting processes, including the creation of a document vault within their BizNet system. PA 11-229, which became effective October 1, 2011, allows for electronic filing and less frequent filling of a number of contracting forms

Requirements for the state's contracting process include ensuring that affidavits, certifications and ethics forms from companies for every contract awarded. This has led to voluminous paper filings that added to the administrative overhead for both the state and those seeking to do business with the state. By filing these documents in one place where they can be viewed by all state agencies, these paperwork requirements can be reduced. According to DAS, it is anticipated that productivity gains resulting from uploading these documents into BizNet will be significant for both the vendor community and the state agency procurement staff.

Effective October 1, 2011 all of the affidavits, certifications and nondiscrimination forms bidders and contractors must submit to DAS are now obtained through the BizNet system where an entity doing business with the state can upload the required documents, and the agencies can review these documents online. The DAS Procurement Division hosts the automated system which eliminates the concerns raised by the OAG regarding non-state ownership of the system.

In November 2011, OPM and the Governor's Nonprofit Liaison met with DAS to determine if BizNet document vault could meet the needs of the nonprofit providers and state agencies with regard to POS contracts. Currently the documents available for uploading in the BizNet system are a subset of those which are needed for POS

contracts; however, DAS has indicated that the system can be enhanced to accommodate the document needs of the POS contracts. With these changes, OPM and the Non-Profit Liaison to the Governor believe that BizNet could serve as the document vault for POS agencies and over the coming months will be pursuing its implementation with State POS agencies, non-profit providers and DAS.

ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT PROCESSING

In mid-January 2012, OPM and the Non-Profit Liaison to the Governor will be establishing a POS Contracting Efficiency Project Management Office within OPM to implement changes aimed at streamlining the contracting process through greater automation, contract consolidation, standardization of reporting requirements and business process improvement. This would include electronic procurement processing. The Office will be staffed by borrowed staff from the six POS agencies and will be assisted by OPM, the Attorney General's Office and DAS.   DAS is now in the process of developing an electronic Request for Proposal process, which will be one of the systems that the Project Office will be reviewing for use in regard to POS procurements. It is anticipated the work of the Project Office will take a period of 9-12 months.

DATA COLLECTION/STORAGE

An abundant amount of data exists in systems and programs spanning each of the health and human service agencies. The challenge has been, and continues to be, integrating and correlating this data into information which can be used for strategic planning, policy making, interagency collaboration and program evaluation.

Pilot projects have been undertaken to develop common platforms to integrate data "silos" existing in state agencies.

Through the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) and the Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority (CHEFA), funding was made available to continue further development of the Connecticut Data Collaborative. The Collaborative is an open affiliation of individuals and organizations, both public and private, working together to advance the use of data and information for public policy, strategic planning, program evaluation and service improvement. Goals of the Collaborative include:

- **Advocacy** - Advocating for the public availability of all state data to inform public debate and to drive planning, policy, budgeting and decision making in state government.
- **Standards** – Promoting and modeling use of data standards around privacy, interoperability, data definitions and quality.

- **Access** – Meeting demands for public access to data through the Collaborative data portal, CTData.org, and the associated Connecticut Nonprofit Strategy Platform.
- **Building Capacity** -- Creating opportunities for Collaborative and peer support in data development and use both online and in person.

The Collaborative is a project of the New Connecticut Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization affiliated with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center. The Collaborative, established in 2009, has received major funding for its work from the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority. Seed funding has been provided by the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, and the United Way of Coastal Fairfield County. Funding for the CTData.org customized data portals has also been received from the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Connecticut Office of Rural Health, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, the United Way of Coastal Fairfield County, the Bridgeport Department of Health, and the Connecticut Health Foundation.

Similarly, the Connecticut Health Information Network (CHIN) aims to create an innovative technological platform for accessing and integrating information from different data sources in a highly secure manner. It establishes an institutional framework to support government-university-community partnerships and collaborations around access to and analysis of health data. The initiative is organized by the Center for Public Health and Health Policy (CPHHP) at the University of Connecticut and is being developed by the CPHHP in collaboration with the Connecticut Departments of Public Health, Developmental Services, Children and Families and Corrections. CHIN complies with security and privacy standards while offering opportunities to integrate and analyze public health data to inform program development and policy decisions. Benefits include:

- The ability to assess target populations and track their interactions with various state agencies over extended periods of time.
- Advancement of evidence-based practices by linking programs and health outcomes over time.
- Enhanced ability for program and agency self-evaluation.
- A vehicle for state agencies to articulate their needs and agenda to government.
- The development of data standards resulting in greater consistency in the structure and content of databases across state agencies

The State Nonprofit Liaison to the Governor, along with state agencies heads, has led efforts to promote increased access to state data for the stated purposes.   As part of the State's efforts to use technology to make State government more efficient, effective and transparent, an emphasis will be placed on implementing integrated systems that will make State services and information more accessible to clients and data available in a manner that leads to more effective policy-making. These efforts are now in the planning stages.

CONCLUSION

This report analyzed the status and potential of the various components of the data warehouse concept envisioned by the Commission on Nonprofit Health and Human Services.

One of the initiatives described in this report is the document vault established by DAS that would provide a central storage area for documents required as part of State contracting processes. The use of a document vault reduces the need for contractors to submit these documents multiple times to the same or different State agencies. OPM will be working with DAS, State health and human service agencies and non-profit providers to open the DAS document vault to the non-profit contractor community.

With the establishment of a POS Contracting Efficiency Project Management Office within OPM in January of 2012, work will begin on modernizing and automating various aspects of the POS contracting and reporting processes.

Through the continued implementation of the Connecticut Data Collaborative, the Connecticut Health Information Network and other initiatives and partnerships, additional information about available services and service needs will become available to clients, service providers and policy-makers. Now that the State is better positioned and committed to efforts to modernize its operations and make its operations more efficient and transparent, a major focus will be on the use of technology to develop systems to share information in a way that will make State government more user friendly to citizens and businesses, cost effective and able to share and analyze data in a manner that will increase accountability and program effectiveness.