Federal Health Interoperability: 5 Building Blocks

Interoperability: it's a topic that's top-of-mind for
today's federal health executives. And it's no surprise—when
done right,
interoperability in the health information ecosystem means
greater safety and
better outcomes for patients, along with a boost in efficiency
and serious cost
savings all around.

But if federal health interoperability is the finish line,
where should health IT leaders get started? And what building
blocks should
serve as the foundation for your interoperability
conversations, both with your
internal team and with external partners? Great questions. For
answers, let's
take a closer look at five distinct elements that you'll want
to consider when
developing your own federal health interoperability project.

Standardization

To maximize your data's value and ability to
be used across agencies and platforms, it's imperative that
you keep electronic
health record (EHR) and health information exchange (HIE) data
consistent and
standardized. Any deviation from the standard carries the
possibility of

rendering the data useless in any system other than your own, so uniformity is
essential.

Standardization counts too when it comes to implementation; stakeholders must agree, upfront, to implementation standards
if you are to ensure a base level of delivery for customers. If one partner
doesn't have the technology, the funding or the will to meet the base standard,
the time to find that out is *before*
the project kicks off rather than once agreements have been signed and
resources have already been extended.

Not certain the best way to standardize data
across data sets? Check out the DATA Act first. The [Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (or DATA Act)](#) of 2014
established government-wide data standards for reportable spending information
and has since been updated with guidance on handling personally identifiable
information. Other [Data Coalition](#) acts, including the [Open Government Data Act](#), may provide
additional best practices on standardization.

Clear governance

Another building block of federal health IT interoperability is that of governance; essentially, who is responsible for
(and has access to) what resources and when? Agreement on these roles and the
rules of engagement upfront is imperative to the success of your shared
project. The time to determine how you will overcome

challenges and work out
any issues in the shared decision-making process is *before* the
process begins, not in the middle of the situation, so
ensure that you, your internal stakeholders and your partner
agencies are on
the same page.

Security & privacy

With [ransomware attacks against municipalities making headlines](#) and [data breaches wreaking havoc on a regular basis](#),
it's understandable that data security and privacy are primary
concerns for
both federal health executives and consumers. And exchanging
data across
agencies brings its own challenges that must be resolved.

The [Office
of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology](#)
(ONC)
has developed specific guidelines related to achieving
interoperability in an
ecosystem where individuals are at the center of their care
and providers have
access to a big-picture view of their health, courtesy of a
single, secure EHR
drawn from disparate sources. Check out ONC's [Interoperability
Standards Advisory](#) for more information.

Technological viability

Think about your technology stack and the
platforms and tools you use on a regular basis. Could your
current software
handle your new interoperability tasks? If not, how difficult
would it be for
your organization to switch to something completely new? And

what impact would
that change have on other areas of your organization?

Before moving forward on a joint project, each
partner and stakeholder must honestly assess your current technology's
infrastructure and capabilities. Along those lines, you must also assess your
organization's ability and willingness to adopt and adapt to new technology.
Your interoperability success will be largely dependent on how committed you
are to making changes that will facilitate interoperability and smooth
information exchange.

Mutual goals, values and trust

The most successful interoperability projects
are those that not only have a strong technology foundation, but a strong
organizational foundation as well—and at the core of that relationship is a
sense of mutual understanding and trust between the stakeholders involved. The
reality is that in projects of this scope, mistakes will be made and things
will be overlooked. Knowing that your partners and stakeholders are just as
committed as you are will help you keep everything in perspective rather than
allowing it to throw you off track.

*Do you
have a specific interoperability challenge that's keeping you awake at night?
Are you encountering more stumbling blocks than building*

blocks? [Get in touch with us today](#) to learn more about how we can help you
overcome your interoperability challenges.

[CNSI-Building-Blocks-FinalDownload](#)

CNSI Receives Two Alliance for Workplace Excellence Awards

Gaithersburg, MD – April 30, 2019 – CNSI, a leading business solutions provider with vast experience developing and delivering innovative health information technology solutions, announced today that they were awarded with two awards from the Alliance for Workplace Excellence (AWE): the 2019 AWE Workplace Excellence Seal of Approval and the 2019 AWE Health & Wellness Award. For the fourth consecutive year, the health IT company was recognized for its exceptional commitment to workplace quality and employee health and wellness. The awards recognize CNSI's commitment to creating and implementing innovative programs for its employees.

The Alliance for Workplace Excellence (AWE) will host their 20th annual awards celebration on Friday, June 7, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Gaithersburg Marriott Washingtonian Center. The event will honor the recipients of the 2019 AWE Workplace Excellence Seal of Approval, Health & Wellness Seal of Approval, EcoLeadership Award, and Diversity Champion Award. A total of 44 employers will be recognized for their exemplary commitment to building excellent places to work in Montgomery County, MD and throughout the United States. The event is anticipated to have approximately 200

business executives in attendance, primarily from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

This year marks the 20th year that AWE will recognize excellence in the workplace. The 44 award winning companies represent organizations of all sizes and all industry types from across the United States. AWE is proud to recognize:
• 38 companies with the 2019 AWE Workplace Excellence Seal of Approval
• 31 companies with the 2019 AWE Health & Wellness Seal of Approval
• 17 companies with the 2019 AWE EcoLeadership Award
• 8 companies with the 2019 AWE Diversity Champion Award

AWE is also proud to recognize three select employers for their exceptional commitment to providing Best Practices Supporting Workers of All Abilities and eight organizations for their Best Practices Supporting Workers 50+. These organizations exhibit a workplace culture that is continuously and comprehensively supportive of a diverse and inclusive workforce.

All award recipients undergo a rigorous assessment process led by an independent review panel of business professional and Master's and/or Ph.D. level students in the fields of business, industrial and organizational psychology, human resources, environmental science, public health and diversity and inclusion.

This year's awards celebration will focus on "The Road to Excellence is Paved with Positive Engagement". Educational and networking sessions will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., followed by a formal awards luncheon to honor all 44 recognized organizations from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. AWE is excited to announce Jessob Reisbeck, Good Morning Washington Anchor, as the emcee of the awards luncheon and Julie Ann Sullivan, Business Culture Expert and author of several books, as the keynote speaker. Additional details available at:

excellentworkplace.org/events. This event is open for press coverage. If interested, please contact AWE by May 31st.

About AWE
The Alliance for Workplace Excellence (AWE) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 1999 by Discovery Communications, Mental Health Association (now EveryMind.), and Montgomery County, MD. Over the past 20 years, AWE has been dedicated to empowering employers to build excellence in the workplace as a means of supporting the quality of life for employees, their families, and the community at-large. AWE is devoted to increasing the number of excellent workplaces within the business community through education and recognition, as a means to enhance the quality of life of its citizens and empower economic growth. For more information: https://www.excellentworkplace.org/.

About CNSI
CNSI delivers a broad range of health information technology enterprise solutions and customizable products to a diverse base of state and federal agencies. We align, build, and manage innovative, high-quality, cost-effective solutions that help customers achieve their mission, enhance business performance, reduce costs, and improve the health for over 50 million Americans. Headquartered in Rockville, Maryland, with locations throughout the U.S. and India, CNSI employs a world-class team of technologists, program managers, and subject matter experts, all of whom have experience with large scale mission-critical information technology implementations. CNSI's website is: http://www.cns-inc.com.

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CNSI Names Carl Rosenblatt Executive Vice President, Chief Business Development Officer

Rockville, MD — April 22, 2019 — CNSI, a leading business solutions provider with vast experience developing and delivering innovative health information technology solutions, announced today that Carl Rosenblatt has joined the company as Executive Vice president, Chief Business Development Officer. In this newly created position, Rosenblatt will be responsible for driving CNSI's business development and sales efforts.

"Carl has a proven track record of winning new business and driving growth. We're thrilled to have him join the team. Carl's expertise will enable us to expand our efforts to deliver innovative solutions that both improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs", said CNSI Chief Executive Officer Todd Stottlemyer.

Rosenblatt joins CNSI from PwC, where he served as the Mid-Atlantic Sales and Marketing Leader. He brings nearly 30 years of experience leading business development and sales teams serving the Federal Government, State government, and commercial marketplaces. He has held leadership roles at several technology companies, including PwC, SRA, BearingPoint, QinetiQ North America and Acentia.

"I am honored to join the CNSI team," said Rosenblatt. "CNSI is a proven leader in transforming healthcare through innovative solutions that improve the quality of lives for millions of Americans. I look forward to building on CNSI's successful history and pursuing opportunities for CNSI to become the nation's most trusted partner for innovative

healthcare solutions."

In his years of business development and sales experience, Rosenblatt doubled the sales of an organization or department on four separate occasions—at SRA, BearingPoint, Acentia, and PwC. He has won multiple awards for his successes and has authored books and training courses in proposal development, business capture, business development, and pricing. Rosenblatt began his career as a sports writer for *The Washington Post* and earned a Bachelor's degree in Government from Harvard University.

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Jim Garrettson, CEO of

Executive Mosaic, Presents Todd Stottlemyer, CEO of Client Network Services, Inc., His First Wash100 Award

Jim Garrettson, founder and CEO of Executive Mosaic, presented Todd Stottlemyer, CEO of Client Network Services, with his first [Wash100 Award](#) on Tuesday.

Executive Mosaic recognizes Stottlemyer for leading the CNSI health IT initiative and driving innovation inside the company. We are honored to present the most coveted award in government contracting to Todd Stottlemyer of CNSI.

Stottlemyer joined CNSI as CEO in 2018 and leads the company's management with an emphasis on identifying new strategic markets and leveraging relationships with customers and partners. Stottlemyer served as the CEO of Inova Center for Personalized Health, Acentia, Apogren and the National Federation of Independent Business.

In addition, Stottlemyer also serves as a board member for Verato, LMI, IST Research Corp., the Northern Virginia Technology Council and served as a board member with the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce for 27 years. Since 2009 Stottlemyer has been a venture partner with Blue Delta Capital Partners.

He earned his bachelor's degree, Phi Beta Kappa, from William & Mary and a law degree, cum laude, from Georgetown University Law Center.

About the Wash100

The Wash100 award, now in its sixth year, recognizes the most influential executives in the GovCon industry as selected by the Executive Mosaic team in tandem with online nominations from the GovCon community. Representing the best of the private and public sector, the winners demonstrate superior leadership, innovation, reliability, achievement and vision.

Visit the Wash100 site to learn about the other 99 winners of the 2019 Wash100 Award. On the site, you can submit your 10 votes for the GovCon executives of consequence that you believe will have the most significant impact in 2019.

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CNSI Names 25-Year Industry Veteran Harish Nanda as Chief Technology Officer

Rockville, MD — April 17, 2019 — CNSI, a leading business solutions provider with vast experience developing and delivering innovative health information technology solutions, announced today that Harish Nanda has joined the company as Chief Technology Officer.

"We're excited to have Harish officially join the team," said CNSI Chief Executive Officer Todd Stottlemyer. "Harish has been advising the company for several months, and it became readily apparent that he would be a great addition to the CNSI team as we work to become the most trusted partner for innovative solutions that improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs."

Nanda is a former senior director with Alvarez & Marsal. He brings more than 25 years of experience in information technology across multiple industries, including deep expertise in software development, program management, strategic planning, outsourcing, and organizational change management. In his role with CNSI, Nanda will be responsible for leading the company's technology organization and accelerating innovation into CNSI's customer solutions.

"I've gotten to know CNSI and the leadership team quite well," said Nanda. "The company has done an incredible job leveraging best-in-class technology to create groundbreaking solutions for our customers. I very much look forward to building on the company's past successes and helping CNSI become the most trusted partner for innovative solutions."

Prior to joining Alvarez & Marsal, Nanda worked with Symetra Financial in Seattle, where he served as Vice President of

Technology leading IT operations and software development for the Retirement, Sales, and Shared Systems divisions. Prior to Symetra, Nanda held senior positions at Point B Consulting and Microsoft. Nanda earned a bachelor's degree in Computer Science Engineering from Karnataka University, India and a master's degree in Management from Cornell University.

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CNSI to Provide Cutting-Edge Medicaid Provider Enrollment System for Texas

Rockville, MD – March 19, 2019 – CNSI, a leading business solutions provider with vast experience developing and delivering innovative healthcare management technology solutions, announced today that it has been selected by the

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to design and implement a new Provider Management and Enrollment System (PMES) for the state's Medicaid program. Work on the four year contract, worth more than $28 million, will begin immediately.

CNSI's PMES solution will modernize, streamline, and advance the state's existing Medicaid provider management platform in accordance with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Medicaid Information Technology Architecture (MITA) framework. When complete, the solution will enable Texas to operate, manage, control, and configure provider management, including functionality for online enrollment or re-enrollment through one centralized portal. CNSI's healthcare platform is regarded as the most advanced Medicaid platform on the market supporting Medicaid modernization efforts across seven States.

"Our mission, in the simplest terms, is to improve care delivery and reduce costs for Medicaid beneficiaries in Texas," said CNSI CEO, Todd Stottlemyer . "By modernizing one of the most fundamental aspects of the Medicaid system — the provider enrollment process — we will lift significant administrative burdens from the state's physicians, whose time and attention is so crucial to the successful delivery of care. Doctors, patients, and even taxpayers, will all benefit."

To facilitate the effort, CNSI has opened an office in Austin dedicated to the PMES project will work. The new location augments CNSI's presence in Texas, which began last year with work on the Department of Veteran Affairs Financial Services Center, also based in Austin, Texas. CNSI also supports local corporate social responsibility initiatives, including Learning Undefeated's MdBioLab — Texas, a mobile science lab that brings STEM learning to hurricane-affected school districts across Texas.

"We are thrilled to become an even bigger part of the Texas community," added Stottlemyer. "At CNSI, we take our

responsibility as a good corporate citizen very seriously. In the coming weeks and months, we'll be looking for more local initiatives and partnerships to engage with as our ties to Texas."

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#StateHIT is This Week!

The tenth annual Healthcare IT Connect Summit kicks off tomorrow in Baltimore. Leaders from across the State Medicaid industry will be joining together to discuss interoperability, Medicaid modernization, data privacy, security along with looking at emerging technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence in the Medicaid space.

At CNSI, we are proud to bring together leaders from the State of Michigan, Washington and Utah to discuss their definitions, approaches, and lessons learned from implementing a modular Medicaid system. We look forward to a lively discussion at the

session: "[Perspectives on How States are Navigating the Lifecycle of Modular Modernization](#)" on Wednesday at 10 AM. Ryan Howells, health IT thought leader and Principal at Leavitt Partners, will lead this interactive conversation.

If you'd like to follow the panel but won't be at HIT in person [register here](#) for complimentary live video streaming. We plan on sharing our top takeaways from the session shortly after so check back in on Thursday for more updates.

ONC and Interoperability: Challenge Accepted

In its [annual report to Congress](#), the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) urged progress in US health IT infrastructure through collaboration and innovation. Not only did the report support implementation of the health IT provisions of the [21st Century Cares Act](#), but it also recommended that health IT stakeholders take specific action to accelerate improvement in the industry.

The ONC's chief challenge, which comes as no surprise to health IT insiders, is improving interoperability. Much [ink has been spilled](#) about all the benefits of interoperability, especially when it comes to electronic health records. However, much less has been written about interoperability can

actually work between government agencies. The technology exists but man-made problems (the report [names six](#): technical, financial, trust, administrative requirements, reporting requirements, and IT usability) stand in the way of innovation.

But at CNSI, we accepted ONC's interoperability challenge—and have been for quite some time.

In 2013, it was announced that Illinois would join Michigan in the [nation's first-ever shared](#) Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS). This cloud-based technology creates savings for both states and the federal government, providing opportunities for Michigan and Illinois to share knowledge and resources, and leverage efficiencies to effectively implement federally mandated operating rules and compliance standards.

Other states are catching wind of the significant time and cost savings (up to $10 million in implementation costs and $20 million in operational costs over the next five years). Just recently, [Arizona and Hawaii](#) are now on the same path to modernizing their Provider Enrollment module using the same interoperable MMIS platform.

But our work doesn't stop there. Putting to use a $200,000 grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New Hampshire Division of Vital Records Administration, and CNSI created a [first-of-its kind mobile app](#) to efficiently allow physicians, medical officials or funeral directors to report causes of death in near real-time. With this technology, the state and the CDC now have new potential to save hundreds and even thousands of lives by catching trends before they become tragedies.

So, yes. The challenges to interoperability exist, but so do the solutions. In what ways would you like to see health IT accept ONC's interopability challenge?

The Focus of HealthIT Tools? Users.

There's a lot to be said about the booming healthcare IT (HIT) industry. What, with [Artificial Intelligence](#), [wearable devices](#), and innovations as game-changing as [insulin delivery systems](#). But how successful would any of these be if it wasn't for the end user driving the need, the functionality, the usability? There's a famous quote, which we believe in wholeheartedly, "A satisfied customer is the best business strategy of all." (Michael LeBoeuf). Turns out that is not just a good quote, but a true one—as the research shows.

A recent [study](#), published by *JMIR Human Factors*, was conducted in order to determine a user-centric model for developing HIT tools.

"There is a need…with digital innovation for a comprehensive process model to guide development that incorporates current industry trends, including design thinking and lean and agile approaches to digital development. This study aims to describe the foundations and phases of our model for user-centered HIT development." [researchers](#) *said.*

So, what does this 'user-centered' development model look

like?

The study, which incorporated advice from clinicians, health IT vendors, and users, boils it down to four-phases. This process follows the typical life cycle of product development but also takes into consideration the unique facets of the health care industry. These phases include: analyzing clinical workflows, conducting user testing, collecting testing and market feedback, and providing training and support for both business owners and users. This last one is key as a common issue within HIT is the learning gap that comes along with fast-paced innovation. The solution is to have more training sessions that give detailed instructions on how to best use the product.

In the end, those who follow this model will create more creative, flexible, and effective HIT tools. Just like the ones we created in Michigan, such as the myHealthButton app and mHealthPortal. We've seen first hand the benefits of putting the consumer first in product development, and we looking forward to continuing innovation with the client always in mind.

What do you think of the new process for developing for health IT tools? Will it positively impact the industry? Let us know by tweeting @CNSICorp with your take!