

MESC & PDX Made Simple

Portland is known for many things: it's simple & cool vibe, incredible coffee, authentic culinary experiences and breathtaking views. We are excited to experience them all as part of next week's annual Medicaid Enterprise Systems Conference ([MESC](#)).

Once again, the conference has a [packed agenda](#) covering a wide range of health IT topics, including modernization, modularity, and procurement management. There's no doubt that the Medicaid industry is complex. But it is also ripe with opportunities to drive innovation and improve care.

To this end, CNSI is excited to provide conference attendees with a unique opportunity to get up close and personal with our modular Medicaid solution, [evoBrix®](#). Always trying something new, this year we will be hosting a speaker series featuring our clients and partners during the conference breaks. Our industry experts will cover the following topics:



The graphic is titled "Medicaid Made Simple" in large blue letters. It is divided into three vertical sections by thin blue lines. The background is light blue with a network of white dots and lines.

Topic	Time	Partner
Create your own modular MMIS	Tuesday @ 10:30 AM Wednesday @ 4:15 PM	evoBrix®
Modernize your system with cloud hosting	Tuesday @ 3:30 PM presented in partnership with	ORACLE®
Tackle the opioid epidemic in Medicaid	Wednesday @ 10:30 AM presented in partnership with	IBM Watson

Attendees who come to these short, 10-minute talks will have the opportunity to win an Amazon echo dot, yet another tool that [simplifies life](#).



Speaking of the simple life. CNSI is proud to host one of Portland's top mindfulness coaches, [Ryan Kenny](#). Ryan is a clinical social worker, mental health therapist and qualified mindfulness instructor with over twelve years of meditation experience. He has brought mindfulness awareness to such organizations as Nike, Amazon and Google. Each morning, Ryan will lead MESC attendees through guided meditation that will leave you feeling relaxed, focused, and ready to start the day. For the early risers who join us we will be giving away a "Medicaid Made Simple, But First Coffee" tumbler and entered to win a travel yoga mat.

Lastly, we would be remiss if we didn't mention some of our top picks of what we think makes Portland great. After spending time scoping the city, here's our list of top ten can't miss:



10. [Portland Japanese Garden](#): Tranquil beauty with an unsurpassed view of Mt. Hood
9. [Craft Beer Galore](#): More breweries than any other city on Earth
8. [Steven Smith Teammaker](#): Sip a leisurely cup while studying the teamakers in action
7. [Meticulous Baristas](#): From French roast to whipped cappuccinos, Portland has you caffeinated
6. [Independent Book Stores](#): Come for the titles, stay for the atmosphere.
5. [Shalom Y'all](#): A modern, mouth-watering take on traditional Mediterranean dishes

4. [Bridges of Portland](#): With a dozen crossings over the Willamette River, there's a lot to discover
3. [Voodoo Doughnut](#): A cult classic shop serving doughnuts that are as delicious as they are colorful
2. [Portland's Art Museum](#): One of the oldest in the country, features both historic and contemporary pieces
1. [MadeHere](#): Bring back a piece of Portland from a shop that showcases the best of local art, design, and goods.

As you can see, we are taking advantage of all that Portland has to offer. We hope you take advantage of this opportunity to talk with us and let us know what we can offer you! See you next week at #MESC2018!

Budget Officers Tackling Health IT at Annual Conference

Oklahoma's largest city is home to unique attractions including the American Banjo Museum and the historic Santa Monica Pier Ferris Wheel. This year, Oklahoma City is also hosting the [National Association of State Budget Officers](#) (NASBO)'s 2018 Annual Meeting, which kicked off yesterday morning. NASBO is a professional membership organization, specifically for finance officers, working to improve state budget practices.



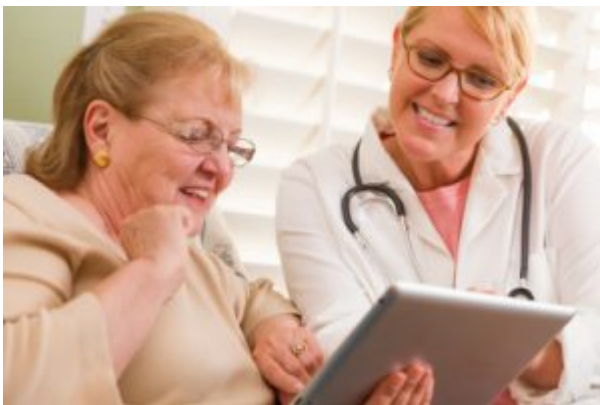
CNSI's Chief Strategy Officer and President of Health and Human Services, Sharif Hussein, is in attendance to hear what SBO's are saying about health IT. To no surprise, key topics include the status of the federal budget, Medicaid expansion, and the growing opioid epidemic. To the latter, the state of [Kentucky](#) ranks number five in the nation in opioid overdose death (a startling 33.5%). This may be why Van Ingram, Executive Director of the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, is leading the panel today on how state budgets need to be adjusted to mitigate against the crisis. Following up this session will be a presentation from the Kaiser Family Foundation on the current landscape of Medicaid waivers—an increasingly high-profile topic.

It will be great to hear firsthand how states are addressing these important issues from a financial perspective. Our representatives look forward to gaining further insights on how to best collaborate, support, and reduce financial burden through innovative solutions.

Patients are the Foundation for Healthcare Interoperability

The health IT world is buzzing about the role of “interoperability” in modernizing the United States healthcare system – and for good reason. The seamless communication between electronic health record systems and medical devices can save time, money, and even lives. But how do we ensure we’re getting the most out of this new type of data exchange?

At CNSI, we understand the key to successful interoperability is remaining patient-focused. Recent actions by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) reflect a similar notion, as the organization integrates technology further into the American healthcare system.



Earlier this year, CMS made a major commitment to keeping patients the focus of healthcare data-sharing by [launching](#) its MyHealthEData initiative – an effort to give patients control of their medical data from the device of their choice. To

further the initiative, last week CMS [announced](#) the launch of its Data Element Library (DEL). A great example of the transition to patient-focused interoperability, the DEL is a free resource that will improve the exchange of health information and coordinated care – specifically for post-acute care organizations.

CMS Administrator Seema Verma [stated](#), “DEL supports the use and sharing of data, and aligns with MyHealthEData, a government-wide effort strengthening the interoperability of

health information.”

The ability to collect and share data improves care coordination and offers the opportunity to improve current treatments and develop new and more effective options. What do you think about the latest effort by CMS to increase interoperability in healthcare? Join the conversation by tweeting @CNSIcorp.

Mental Wellness and Health IT: An Issue, An Opportunity

It's a given fact that technology plays an important role in how we measure our health. We are relying more and more on smartphones and wearables to track everything from our daily fitness activities to our sleep cycles. And according to researchers, they could also be useful for tracking our mental health.

While mental health can be an uncomfortable topic to discuss, recent tragedies have once again put a spotlight on the issue. In the month of May, the world lost both Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain to suicide. Their heartbreaking losses served as a good reminder that almost 45,000 Americans take their own lives every year. Following the announcements, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline [reported](#) a 65 percent increase in calls for help.

There is, however, hope in health IT. A [recent study](#) published by Journal of Medical Internet Research (JMIR) recognized that a certain machine learning algorithm can analyze data collected from wearable devices to identify risk factors for

mental health issues. By applying machine learning, features associated with stress and poor mental health could then be identified, offering clinicians a better understanding of how treatments are impacting patients.

The results of the study exhibit the potential for health IT to play a major part in improving mental health outcomes. Another example of this potential is being demonstrated through the State of New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation [electronic cause of death application](#). This mobile app, developed by CNSI, allows for health officials to report and see the cause of death immediately. This allows them to determine if the death is related to other cases. The power of this data is unlimited, especially as the country faces the extreme opioid epidemic, which took approximately 200,000 lives in 2016 (the most recent year for which data is available).

As health IT advances, we look forward to not only watching but contributing to how it can be used to improve all aspects of wellness—including mental health.

How else can health IT address the most pressing health crises we face? Let us know on Twitter @CNSICorp.

Data, Meet Human: How We Must Use Both

In a health crisis as complex as the opioid epidemic, accurate collection and analysis of data is critical. In a recent [article](#), The Washington Post recognized that in battling America's opioid crisis, a lack of accurate information is causing medical leaders to over-correct the issue, harming

non-addicts. As the former surgeon general, Vivek H. Murthy, so eloquently said, “We have to be careful of using a blunt instrument where a fine scalpel is needed.” That fine tuning happens when big data turns into data-based precision medicine.

Although a term new to most patients (66% in fact—according to a recent [survey](#) by the Personalized Medicine Coalition and GenomeWeb), personalized or “precision medicine” could be one of the answers to the opioid epidemic. In the most simplest of terms, precision medicine takes into account a patient’s genes, environment and lifestyle in order to predict which type of care and prevention strategy would work best. It is at this moment in treatment that an important introduction is made.

Data, meet Human. Human, meet Data.



As technology advances, as opioid deaths rise, and as data collection only increases, it is important that we—in the healthcare IT industry—remember that we cannot have one (data) without the other (human). Bernie Monegain, Editor-at-Large for Healthcare IT News and Women in Health IT, put it best when she [wrote](#), “If physicians and caregivers just focus on... genetics without taking into account who the patients are as people, to better understand their activity and behavior, then they will be missing a big part of what drives an individual’s health.”

As evidenced by precision medicine [success stories](#), there is a long-term and mutually beneficial relationship developing between Data and Human. Here at CNSI, we look forward to being a part of this partnership and using it to positively impact lives.

Taking on Hunger: A Partnership Come Full Circle

In the ever-changing world of health IT, it could be easy to lose site of the challenges facing our own communities, like the [ongoing issue of hunger](#) and the growing problem of [food insecurity](#). However, our employees have made it a priority to make time to help those less fortunate by giving back in the communities in which we live and work.

This is why we are engaged in a multi-year, multi-faceted partnership with DC's largest organization combating hunger, the [Capital Area Food Bank](#) (CAFB). Over the course of one week, our employees were able to participate in and witness this partnership come full circle.

Kicking it all off, over 20 CNSI employees teamed up with our federal client from the U.S. Department of Labor [Office of Workers' Compensation Program](#) for a day of volunteering at CAFB headquarters. The attendees participated in an eye-opening hunger simulation activity, in which each person is given a certain amount of money for grocery shopping. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate the difficult (and often daily) choices made by those facing food insecurity. Next, the group gathered and sorted 9,200 pounds of food, which equates to roughly 8,200 meals for local families.


For most organizations, this is where the work ends. However, our employees took it to the next level the following week. The 9,200 pounds of food sorted were transported up to South Lake Elementary School for the monthly [Family Market Day](#). These markets provide fresh produce and pantry items to 1,500 families with school-aged children. Each month, volunteers set-up the the event and assist families as they 'shop' for healthy food options. This month, they were were able to see firsthand how the work they did just a few days earlier had a direct and positive impact to those right in our own backyard.

CNSI is extremely proud of the work we do with CAFB—and all of our community partners. By working together—holistically and strategically—we improve and increase access to food,

education, and health services. Thanks for the opportunity to #GiveBack!



How Cause of Death Data Can Save Lives

Our nation's opioid problem has quickly escalated from a crisis to a full-blown epidemic. As the death toll continues to rise, government officials are beginning to rely on the health IT industry for effective strategies to alleviate this national emergency. Especially in the hardest hit states, the need for technology that allows for real-time medical updates to state and federal officials who make policy recommendations has never been greater. 

Luckily, in New Hampshire – where the rate of opioid overdoses in the state is [three times higher](#) than the national average – CNSI helped develop the nation's first cause-of-death mobile application to do just that. [Launched](#) in January 2017, the

New Hampshire Electronic Cause of Death app, or simply “NeCoD” allows medical examiners to certify and describe deaths via a mobile app. The information is then uploaded to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention twice a day, beating the old pen-and-paper method by months!

In the past, a cause of death report may have only listed “drug overdose,” but in NeCoD, the user is prompted to provide more detail – the specific type of drug and volume, for instance. Armed with a deeper understanding of the death – or a string of deaths – policy makers can respond more effectively. In this example, officials may recognize the spread of a new type of drug and relay that information to local law enforcement and health care workers.

Importantly, the system becomes a two-way street. If CDC officials begin to see a pattern in the data, they can insert their own questions into the app so particular concerns are addressed on the ground. In the age of the opioid crisis, the quick transfer of accurate information could prove incredibly important. With the surge of deaths related to addiction and overdose, it’s vital that policymakers have up-to-date details on the crisis.

We are extremely proud of this innovative technology and look forward to ways in which it can be adapted to increase efficiencies and help save lives.

The *Concord Monitor* was good enough to dedicate a [whole article](#) to NeCoD. Check it out and let us know what you think!

Bring Your Kids to Work 2018: Agents of Positive Change

Bring Your Kids to Work Day is always one of our favorite days of the year and the 2018 celebration was no exception. In keeping with the [Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Foundation](#) theme, “Agents of Positive Change,” we had a fun-filled day instilling the values of workplace comradery and generosity in the next generation of health IT leaders.



Indeed, this year’s theme was perfect for CNSI as being agents of positive change is a central tenet of our business. Externally, our health IT solutions improve the lives of over 30 million of Americans. Internally, we strive to foster a cooperative and supportive workplace for our employees. We take teaching these values to our children very seriously.

Playing on the “agent” theme, we introduced the CNSI kids to workplace values through a series of four “agent training” activities:

- * Makings of a Spy: Playing Interactive games put on by the [International Spy Museum](#)
- * Helping Others: Decorating hats and welcome home kits for children supported by the [Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless](#)
- * Investigating Skills: Asking questions about their parents’ work at CNSI
- * Reporting back to HQ: Presenting what they learned about their parents’ job
- * Final Exam: Cyber Security quiz game hosted by our very own “Agent Jack”

Of course, we also made sure to balance out the learning with plenty of fun. The kids got to go outside for a team building exercise, were treated to an ice cream social, and received

giveaways, including t-shirts, spinners, lanyards and water bottles. With over 70 kids participating across our Headquarters, Michigan, Illinois, and Washington offices, the event was another huge success!




CNSI: 25 Years of Being ‘Open for Business’


Maryland Governor Larry Hogan launched a new campaign in 2017 to grow the state’s economy and job market. The phrase “[Open for Business](#)” is being used on all sorts of mediums in effort to attract companies and employers. Although Governor Hogan may have coined the phrase recently, CNSI has been committed to driving the economy and providing jobs right here in Montgomery County for nearly 25 years. We were proud to discuss our efforts and achievements with county representatives last week.



As part of a brief community service video sponsored by the [Montgomery County Council](#) (MCC), CNSI was interviewed about our successful relationship with [Worksource Montgomery](#) (WSM), a public-private partnership that connects individuals to careers in Montgomery County. CNSI connected with WSM as part of the [Maryland Workforce Exchange](#), attending recruiting events to source viable candidates for our growing cadre of state and federal health IT projects. MCC interviewed Sri Akula, Vice President Recruiting, and a recent hire, Andrew McClelland, asking them questions from the perspective of both the employer and the employee. It goes without saying that their experiences with WSM were positive and—more importantly—productive.

“Without Worksource Montgomery hosting their career fair  attended by such high-quality employers, I don’t think I would have found CNSI,” said Andrew confidently during the video interview.

Designed with the purpose of protecting and empowering Marylanders in workforce development, the MWE offers a complete set of employment tools for job seekers and employers in Maryland. Citizens can search jobs, create resumes, and find education and training, while employers are able to find candidates, post jobs, and search labor market information.

“For us, Worksource Montgomery is a way of sourcing  exceptional talent from right here in our own backyard. If we can bring someone on that is local, it stimulates both our business and the local economy,” followed Sri.

As an industry leader dedicated to giving back to the communities in which we live and work – we understand the importance of hiring the best and the brightest from right here in Montgomery County. We look forward to continuing to

utilize the MWE for years to come, and you should look forward to seeing the video. Check back to watch!

Earth Month: For the Planet, for Public Health

First there was “Earth Day”, which turned into “Earth Week,” which then became “[Earth Month](#)”. With focus on sustainability, the popular phrase now is “[Make every day Earth Day](#).” That is exactly what we intend to do here at CNSI.

Our environmental best practices started back at the inception of our formalized Corporate Social Responsibility program, [iCare](#). Since then, the company has worked hard to live out our commitment in tangible ways, including giving preference to vendors with sustainable products and practices, reducing office fossil fuel consumption, and eliminating wasteful habits like the use of paper cups. As a result, our corporate headquarters was given the distinct honor of Montgomery County’s Green Business Certification ([see our shout-out here](#)).

But environmental stewardship isn’t just about one badge or one day. That is why we are taking the month of April to tell our employees about the different ways they can engage in Earth Month. From weekly reminders on [reducing plastic consumption](#) to providing a seminar on recycling tips to hosting an e-cycling event to sharing links to local Earth Day events, CNSI wants to ensure that both as a company and as individuals we each do our part in taking care of our planet, which is really also taking care of ourselves. The Former Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Gina McCarthy, put it best when she said...



As a health IT firm dedicated to improving the lives and health of Americans, we couldn't agree more. From our CNSI family to yours, Happy Earth Day/Week/Month/Year!