

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!