

Health and Human Services: Doing More with Less

A White Paper on Using Technology to Achieve a
Connected HHS

Table of Contents

3	Foreword
5	Rethinking Human Services
7	The Unmet Needs of HHS
8	The Opportunity
10	The Solution
13	References

Foreword

Social Solutions is a leading provider of performance management software for human services. The company's Efforts to Outcomes (ETO™) software goes beyond case management, incorporating Microsoft technology to deliver a comprehensive platform for human services connectivity. Social Solutions' goal of helping state and local government agencies collaborate, save time, and improve service quality fits into the Microsoft vision of transforming the delivery of health and human services.

The marketplace for social services is rapidly changing. As unemployment rises and more people live in poverty, the need for social services and improved care is increasing. At the same time, deficits are growing and governments are grappling with shrinking budgets. The only way to do more with less is through increased innovation, both in the business and technological arenas.

Over the years, Microsoft has worked with a range of policymakers at the government and foundation levels to develop a detailed understanding of the challenges that HHS organizations face and the approaches required to meet these pressures. The result of this work is the Microsoft Connected Health and Human Services (HHS), a vision for delivering state-of-the-art health and human services. Connected HHS is an approach that promotes efficient program operations, enables effective coordination across multiple organizations, and simplifies compliance with complex reporting requirements.

Social Solutions 
transforming human services

Microsoft

The marketplace for social services is rapidly changing. As unemployment rises and more people live in poverty, the need for social services and improved care is increasing.

At the root of this vision is the Microsoft Connected HHS Business and Technology Architecture, designed to help HHS organizations address their most pressing challenges. The Connected HHS Framework provides a framework for helping organizations offer a more connected and coordinated approach to health and human services centered on the individual and family. By taking advantage of this framework, caregivers can improve services to a growing population, while more effectively managing their costs.

Social Solutions' ETO software is an important component of the Microsoft Connected HHS vision. A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Social Solutions is one of the first providers in the industry to embrace cloud-based computing, which means that HHS organizations can use its software over the Internet through off-site data centers. By offering its solution in the cloud, Social Solutions is making it possible for community-based organizations that may not otherwise have the budget to coordinate services and better measure program performance. ETO implementations in Boulder County, Colorado; the City of Hartford, Connecticut; and Monterey County, California—all mentioned in the body of this white paper—demonstrate firsthand how Connected HHS can tear down the silos between programs and improve the impact that HHS has on people's lives.

Because local communities are the focal point for the delivery of today's social services, it is essential that community-based organizations have access to the technology needed to improve client outcomes, while maximizing every dollar spent. Yet the reality has been that social services programs operate in isolation, with caseworkers unable to see the array of programs that their clients participate in and how their clients are faring within each of these programs. Microsoft is committed to improving case coordination by offering caregivers a unified view into all the services their clients are receiving, who the providers are, and the progress their clients are making within each of these programs. With a 360-degree view of their clients' needs, caregivers can more easily identify at-risk situations and improve the services they provide.

As more organizations embrace the Connected HHS vision—including critical software from Social Solutions—we will see the development of innovative practices that offer substantial benefits for individuals and families in need. Ultimately, caregivers will be better equipped to serve an expanding population, while helping people to lead better lives.

Bill O'Leary

Executive Director, U.S. Public Sector

Health and Human Services



Rethinking Human Services

Doing more with less is nothing new for state and local government (SLG) human service agencies. The recent recession has amplified this trend as budget shortfalls have resulted in service and staff cutbacks. Grappling with large deficits, states are drastically reducing vital human services programs in work-force development, mental health, family health, and transitional housing programs.

Despite the decline in available resources, the need for human services continues to swell as the numbers of unemployed and those living in poverty surge. Further complicating the situation is the thorny, redundant, and costly delivery of health and human services that consume large swaths of annual government budgets. The costs are high, but the stakes are even higher. It's critical that agencies identify innovative approaches to coordinating services delivery and improving outcomes while reducing overhead.

Without a strong link to outcomes, metrics like “number of patients treated” obscure performance and misuse resources.

As scrutiny of health and human services programs increases, decision makers are under pressure to maximize every dollar spent. This is not only an issue of transparency and accountability but also of effectiveness. Without a strong link to outcomes, metrics like “number of patients treated” obscure performance and misuse resources. Generic metrics also neglect the importance of outcomes related to recipient progress. Drilling deeper into recipient progress, providers get a clearer picture of how to change programs, staff, and resources to deliver improved performance.

Tools ill-suited to the task, outmoded technology and custom-built software solutions continue to hamstring decision makers by consuming resources, limiting system understanding to a select few, and protracting the time required to implement new approaches. SLG human services agencies need solutions that let them focus on recipient outcomes rather than systems building.



Toward a 360-Degree View of the Client

Increasingly, health and human services organizations are striving for a 360-degree view of their clients. Oftentimes, a client who obtains a benefit such as food stamps may also be receiving other benefits such as energy credits and Medicaid through separate programs. Yet caseworkers managing one program lack a view into the other services their clients are accessing or how they are faring within each of these programs.

A 360-degree view puts the client at the center of HHS programs. It shows HHS workers all the programs a client is participating in so they can avoid duplicative services, avert crises, and provide consistent top-level service.

A 360-degree view puts the client at the center of HHS programs. It shows HHS workers all the programs a client is participating in so they can avoid duplicative services, avert crises, and provide consistent top-level service.

Social Solutions and Microsoft share the common vision of providing a comprehensive view of the customer. Microsoft Case Coordination solutions, like Efforts to Outcomes from Social Solutions, offer HHS organizations a holistic view of the customer to improve client outcomes. Organizations get a complete picture of the clients they serve. They can see all the services that each participant is receiving, who the providers are, and the resulting outcomes for that person. They also get a longitudinal view into all the interactions with the participant before, during, and after his or her enrollment in a specific program.

By providing a unified view of the client, Microsoft Case Coordination makes it possible for HHS organizations to improve efficiency by eliminating redundant data entry as well as the need to fax or manually transmit client information back and forth between agencies. It helps HHS workers to more quickly identify and monitor at-risk situations, increasing their ability to prevent crises from occurring. Moreover, it improves client outcomes by increasing visibility into the full range of services clients are receiving, and making it easier to measure progress and determine what additional resources may be needed.

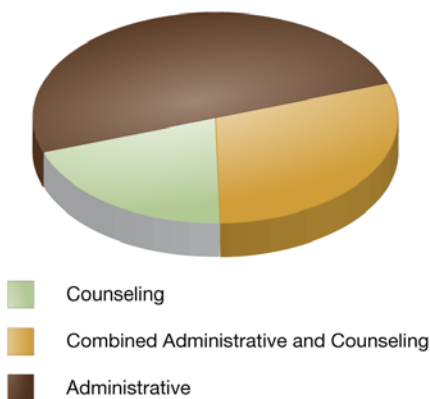


The Unmet Needs of HHS

Generally speaking, traditional technology solutions do not satisfy today’s complex human services needs. HHS providers need simplicity and flexibility—a single platform that links recipient efforts across programs, facilitates visibility, and improves communication. As the nature of HHS delivery evolves, effective decision makers need a platform that addresses the following capabilities:

- Qualitative/behavioral metrics that link behavioral outcomes to quantitative assessments
- Improved communication and coordination support to help recipients get the right services at the right time
- Enhanced visibility so decision makers can link efforts to outcomes and make changes
- Accurate and timely reporting that can be easily generated in minutes, not months
- Flexible configurations that keep pace with the rapid evolution of human services programs
- Cost-effective solutions that save staff time and budgetary resources

Front-line Staff Spend Less than 50% of Time on Direct Support of Families and Individuals



Source: Child Welfare - HHS Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff, GAO 2003

HHS providers are challenged by outworn systems and by custom-built software that often is outdated by the time it is implemented. These solutions fail to provide the ability to quickly make changes to reflect changing program needs without requiring costly and time-consuming application development expenditures. Furthermore, large-scale deployments of custom, open source, or older software often prevent local agencies, programs, and organizations from quickly making appropriate changes to tailor the system to local needs. Poor reporting functionality is a hallmark of these inadequate tools and hurts an agency’s bottom line. A recent RAND study found that compliance-related tasks often consume as much as 11 percent of funds and 44 percent of staff time.

These older systems often do not provide HHS agencies with the qualitative metrics, timely reporting functions, or agility to change with the times. The changing nature of service delivery requires a flexibility and functionality that these systems simply cannot accommodate. Highly customized systems take human services agencies to the other extreme. Custom and proprietary system design makes it hard for programs to talk to each other and for providers to report to funders. Complex custom systems also make it difficult for case managers to enter and report outcomes, resulting in user frustration and limited adoption.

Older and overly customized systems require significant investments in full-time or long-term contractual IT staff. Maintenance of aging systems consumes resources without improving core functionality. Going forward, the costly support expenses incurred by these systems will be untenable.

The Opportunity

Recent advances in software technology provide state and local human service agencies with state-of-the-art services tools that are effective and affordable.

Recent advances in software technology provide state and local human service agencies with state-of-the-art service tools that are effective and affordable. Using web-based performance management platforms that the average user can configure, state and local human service agencies can:

- Simultaneously track and communicate outcomes across programs and agencies.
- Increase outcome visibility by reducing data duplication.
- Make informed decisions via dashboards and ad-hoc reports generated in minutes instead of months.
- Improve coordination of services delivery across multiple programs and use a 360-degree view of recipients to improve care quality and outcomes.
- Reduce expenses via automation, outsourcing, shared development costs, and reduced energy expenses.
- Rapidly implement changes based on changing policy, evolving best practices, new reporting requirements, and management needs.

Platforms that incorporate software-as-a-service (SaaS) models automatically update software with no additional expenses. By including updates in the monthly service charges, SaaS models provide seamless software evolution without the large budget hiccups that updates entail. True SaaS platform providers deliver a competitive marketplace where multiple third-party vendors or an agency's IT group can create new point solutions to be delivered in conjunction with the software. The marketplace concept will be key to human service agencies capitalizing on their investments while balancing costs and the imperative to support open competition to meet ever-changing needs with fewer resources.

We see the marketplace concept evolving from providing point solutions (such as mobility extensions, integration plug-ins, and scanning devices) to addressing program and infrastructure issues. Program solutions include the ability to use common or standardized configurations developed by other agencies and deployed rapidly by new agencies.



In the same way that water utilities offer people within a community a common water resource that they pay for based on usage, cloud computing centralizes computing power over the Internet, so users can pay for computing based on actual use.



The Nurse Family Partnership recently adopted the ETO software platform to deploy its evidenced-based model across more than 600 state, local, and nonprofit provider agencies. In addition to program replication, the marketplace concept is expanding to include cloud-based computing, which makes it possible to provide IT resources—including software, storage, and servers—as scalable services over the Internet and hosted in off-site data centers. With the cloud, infrastructure and computing resources can be shared across traditional geographic boundaries in a seamless fashion, so organizations can deliver improved services at lower cost.

Health and Human Services in the Cloud

Social Solutions is one of the first providers in the health and human services industry to offer a cloud-based solution. Cloud computing makes it possible for IT resources—including software, storage, and servers—to be provided as scalable services over the Internet and hosted in off-site data centers.

In the same way that water utilities offer people within a community a common water source that they pay for based on usage, cloud computing centralizes computing power over the Internet, so users can pay for computing based on actual use. This is in sharp contrast to the way most organizations manage computing today, where they own their IT infrastructures and manage all the maintenance themselves.

The web-based Efforts to Outcomes application can be fully configured and deployed without writing a line of code. Through ETO Marketplace, partners can expand on ETO, offering complementary software and solutions to HHS organizations. Social Solutions expects multiple applications to be released that take advantage of the Windows Azure platform, which provides developers with the ability to create, host, and manage web applications over the Internet.

Many state and local governments are exploring cloud computing as a way to deliver better services at lower cost. According to an April 2010 survey by the Public Technology Institute, 45 percent of local governments in the United States already use cloud computing for applications and services, and another 19 percent plan to implement some form of cloud computing within the next 12 months.

The cloud puts critical software into the reach of community-based organizations that may not otherwise have the budget to buy and maintain their own IT infrastructure. Using IT resources hosted in the cloud, HHS organizations can monitor program performance, share data, and connect their programs to those of other HHS organizations, achieving a unified view of the clients they serve. The cloud provides a cost-effective way to achieve the goal of connected health and human services. At a time of shrinking budgets, it opens the door for HHS organizations to provide top-level service to a burgeoning population.

Early cloud concepts include using shared storage, directory services, and processing time. Reuse of a SaaS platform produces substantial long-term savings via increased user familiarity and also frees state and local agencies from costly staffing expenses that come with self-managed software.

In principle, open source software, or software that is freely available and used, can save organizations time and money. Yet in practice, it often becomes just one more custom-developed system that is hard to update quickly and difficult to support. Agencies often underestimate the programming expenses required to rework software to meet their specific needs.

The Solution

Efforts to Outcome software—designed for human service professionals by the human service professionals at Social Solutions, Inc. (SSI)—assists state and local human service agencies by linking good intentions to measurable outcomes. Quickly deployed and easily configured to suit individual needs, ETO software’s web-based performance management solutions provide real-time reporting capabilities that ensure program efficiency and proper stewardship of limited public funds.

By identifying needs and creating community-wide solutions that connect programs, providers, and agencies, ETO software keeps human services agencies apprised of program performance so they can make timely changes to enhance efficiency. For example, a recent deployment of ETO software in Boulder County, Colorado, has enhanced coordination among county agencies resulting in increased program efficiency and enhanced program flexibility. The limited communication among agencies made it difficult to assess needs and deliver services appropriately. But after implementing ETO software, multiple divisions in the county government were able to share participant data. As a result, participants now enjoy faster and more accurate referrals, service providers experience reduced overhead, and Boulder County has achieved a 360-degree view of the populations it serves. Moreover, by implementing ETO software, Boulder County has been able to adopt an “Every Door Is the Right Door” model that allows agencies to make a single needs-assessment at the first point of entry. Other agencies are informed of a client’s needs so that demographic data doesn’t need to be entered multiple times when a client applies for more than one program.

“The Efforts to Outcomes platform has helped us to more efficiently allocate resources, and to more holistically address participant and family needs. The wait time for one of our programs for families in crisis went from three weeks to the same day.”

- Robin Bohannon
Boulder County Director of
Community Services

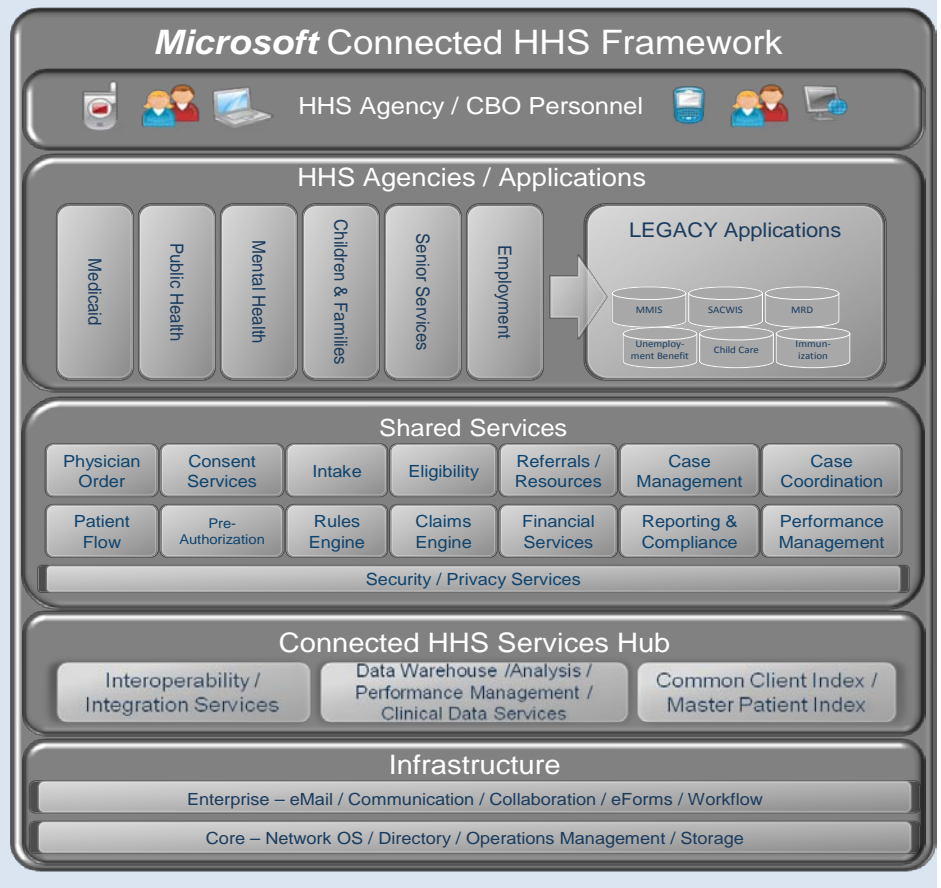


“The Efforts to Outcomes platform has helped us to more efficiently allocate resources, and to more holistically address participant and family needs,” says Robin Bohannon, Boulder County Director of Community Services. “The wait time for one of our programs for families in crisis went from three weeks to the same day.”

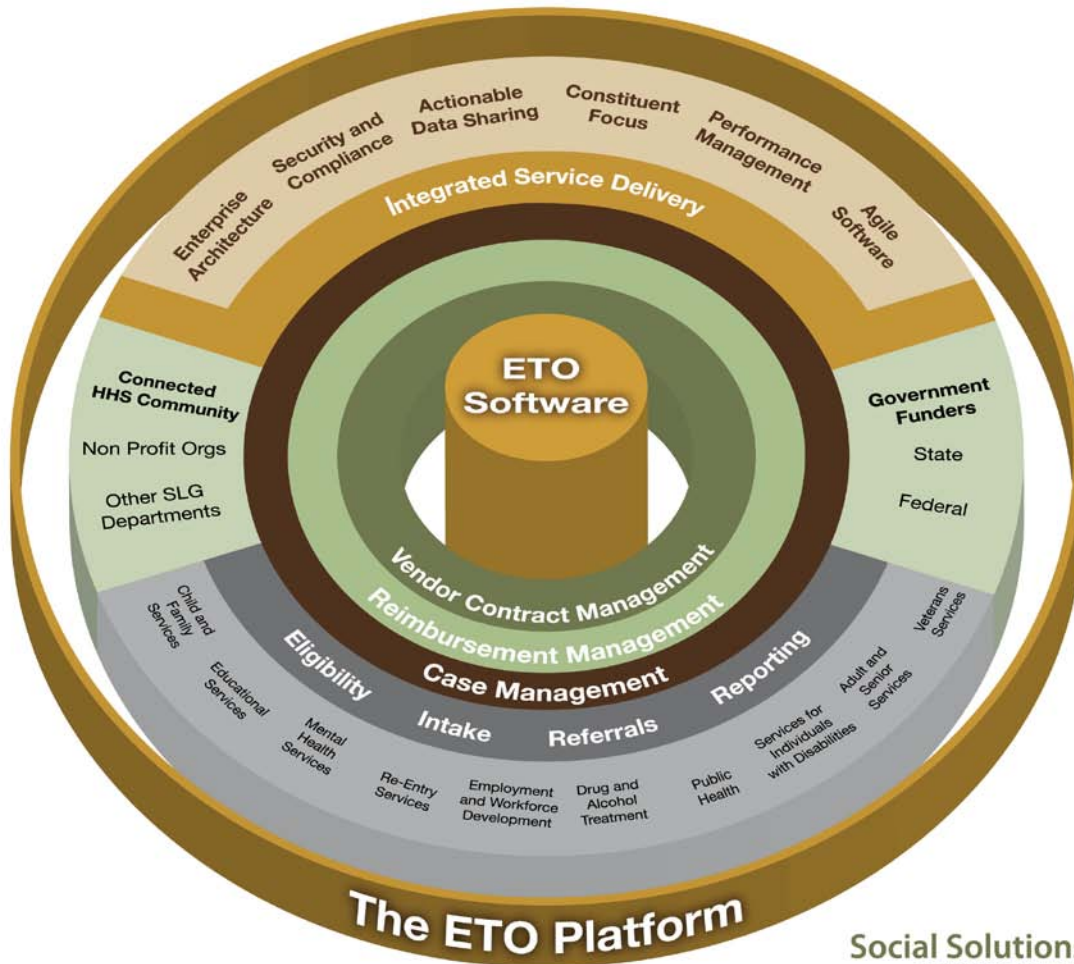
The Microsoft Connected HHS Framework

Social Solutions' efforts to improve client outcomes are a key component of the Microsoft vision to create a holistic, multiprogram approach to health and human services. This vision involves moving from the provision of disconnected services to a connected system of care centered on the individual and the family.

At the core of this vision is the Microsoft Connected HHS Business and Technology Architecture, a flexible approach for addressing the challenges that HHS organizations face. The Connected HHS Framework consists of technology initiatives that are closely aligned with business goals to help the HHS industry achieve a shared services environment. The framework uses a component structure that organizations can take advantage of to invest in technology incrementally rather than ripping and replacing their existing systems. By delivering incremental improvements with the least time and cost requirements, the Connected HHS Framework provides the opportunity for a rapid and flexible response to changing business requirements.



The ETO Platform: Enabling Connected Health and Human Services



Social Solutions 
transforming human services

“We reviewed many different tools and made a recommendation for ETO based on the flexibility of the platform and its open architecture. It was important that we could customize the platform to suit the various needs of the organizations in the county.”

- Daniel Bach
Monterey County
Department of Social
Services

By using ETO performance management software, local governments like the City of Hartford, Connecticut, broke down the silos among youth services programs and linked participant efforts across enterprises and programs including nonprofit providers, schools, funders, and government. Removing barriers, the City of Hartford now tracks more than 15,000 active participants across the city.

The coordinated effort helped create a “No Wrong Door” approach to case management, making the referral process easier and ensuring that recipients received the right resources at the right time. Eric Jackson, Chief Technology Officer for the City of Hartford adds, “ETO software helps us better identify needs in our community, inconsistencies in our service and ways we can more effectively provide for our residents.”

In addition to the enhanced communication among programs, the scalable and adaptive nature of ETO software provides organizations with a versatile platform that can be configured on the fly. Daniel Bach, senior management analyst for the Monterey County Department of Social Services in California, adds, “We reviewed many different tools and made a recommendation for ETO based on the flexibility of the platform and its open architecture. It was important that we could customize the platform to suit the various needs of the organizations in the county.”

As the need for and scrutiny of human services management increases, state and local human services agencies already subsisting on limited budgets need cost-effective solutions that improve program performance. ETO software transforms good intentions into measured outcomes. With intuitive and flexible platform solutions that integrate programs and stakeholders, ETO software gives state and local government organizations the capability to improve program visibility and reporting, resulting in more effective service delivery and better stewardship of public funds.

For More Information

To learn more about Social Solutions, the ETO Platform and performance management solutions for State and Local Government Human Services organizations, please contact:

Matt Schubert
General Manager
Public Sector
matt@socialsolutions.com
(410) 207-2747

You can also learn more about Social Solutions products and services by calling (866) 732-3560 or visiting the website, www.socialsolutions.com.

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877)568-2495. Customers in the United States and Canada who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to www.microsoft.com

Microsoft Government

Microsoft applications, solutions, and services help to empower public servants and government employees to share critical information and serve their constituents more efficiently.

References

Bodamer, Rodney. "Time for Program Managers to Embrace Agile Development."

Washington Technology. January 2010.

http://washingtontechnology.com/articles/2010/01/22/program-managers-need-to-become-agile.aspx?sc_lang=en

Cloud Security Alliance. *Domain 12: Guidance for Identity & Access Management V2.1*.

April 2010. www.cloudsecurityalliance.org/guidance/csaguide-dom12-v2.10.pdf

Douglas, Merrill. "Money-Saving Strategies for Coping with Shrinking Government IT

Budgets." *Government Technology*. August 2008. [http://www.govtech.com/pcio/Money-](http://www.govtech.com/pcio/Money-Saving-Strategies-for-Coping-with-Shrinking.html)

[Saving-Strategies-for-Coping-with-Shrinking.html](http://www.govtech.com/pcio/Money-Saving-Strategies-for-Coping-with-Shrinking.html)

Hayes, Heather. "State and Local Market Rich with IT Opportunities." *Washington*

Technology. April 2009. [http://washingtontechnology.com/Articles/2010/04/05/COVER-state-](http://washingtontechnology.com/Articles/2010/04/05/COVER-state-local-economic-crunch-transform-IT.aspx?s=wtdaily_080410&Page=1)

[local-economic-crunch-transform-IT.aspx?s=wtdaily_080410&Page=1](http://washingtontechnology.com/Articles/2010/04/05/COVER-state-local-economic-crunch-transform-IT.aspx?s=wtdaily_080410&Page=1)

Lara-Cinisomo, Sandraluz, and Paul Steinberg. *Meeting Funder Compliance: A Case Study of*

Challenges, Time Spent, and Dollars Invested. Rand Corporation, 2006. www.rand.org

Lipton, Amy. *From Field to Fed: HHS Integration Gains Momentum*. Stewards of Change

series. June 2010. www.stewardsofchange.com/LearningCenter/Pages/WhitePapers.aspx

Montalbano, Elizabeth. "Government Sees Virtualization Benefits." *Information Week –*

Government. July 2008. [www.informationweek.com/news/government/enterprise-](http://www.informationweek.com/news/government/enterprise-apps/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=225900083)

[apps/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=225900083](http://www.informationweek.com/news/government/enterprise-apps/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=225900083)

O’Leary, W. D. *From Urgency to Innovation—Improving Access, Outcomes, and Efficiencies Through Connected Health and Human Services*. 2010.

www.microsoft.com/industry/government/health/hhs.aspx

O’Leary, William D. and Dave Meyers. *U.S. Public Sector Connected Health & Human Services: Executive Summary*. June 2008.

www.microsoft.com/industry/government/health/hhs.aspx

