

Information Technology Capital Investment Program
Project Status Report

To: Information Technology Strategy and Investment Committee
John Vittner, Office of Policy and Management

From: Allan Hackney

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Agency: Office of Health Strategy

Project: Health Information Exchange

Project Manager: Allan Hackney

Reporting Period: Project Inception through 06/30/2020

Total Funds Requested: \$7,559,960

Total Funds Allotted to Agency: \$3,227,281

Accumulative Total Capital Fund Expenditures to Date: \$0

Brief Project Description/Summary:

The Office of Health Strategy is working to establish a statewide health information exchange (HIE). The goals of the HIE have been established in consultation with the HIT Advisory Council and include 1) creating and managing the identity of patients and caregivers, 2) creating a trust framework that facilitates the exchange of health data, 3) enabling use cases that provide specific value to the health ecosystem and 4) enabling analytics to drive better health outcomes, lower costs, reductions in the burden of government and improved population health.

Summary of Progress Achieved to Date:

In July 2019 OHS established the Health Information Alliance Inc., a nonprofit, nongovernmental entity to build and deliver services. Now known by the brand name Connie, Connie has been developing its independent capabilities and now has a functioning Board that meets monthly. During this time the trust framework has been socialized with key health systems and CTHealthLink has been the first to sign on to Connie. Initial use cases are documented along with onboarding procedures. Initial staff hired on an interim basis via subcontract. The qualified data sharing agreements with allow Connie participants to the network of networks. A technical assistance program has been developed to aid onboarding by offsetting costs. The Core Data and Analytics Solution (CDAS) infrastructure built and completed testing with synthetic data from another HIE. Connie has completed an RFQ process for an integration engine and anticipates moving forward with a selection in the coming month. It is anticipated that an interim Executive Director may be brought on board in July 2020. Connecticut's Department of Social Services has agreed to transfer Project Notify to Connie in order to build out the HIE's capabilities and service as the notification service. Connie is further developing a consumer facing website and has an office space into the UConn Technology Incubator Program (TIP). CTHealthLink has become the first entity to sign on to Connie.

Issues and Risks:

This current work is being supported through the HITECH Act which provides 90/10 federal funds. This program runs out Sep 30, 2021. Connecticut is at risk of not onboarding substantial portions of the health organizations given the compressed timeframe, which could result in organizations having no offset for costs to connect to the HIE. The principal dependency is for the HIE entity to be established, enabling the participating organizations to sign onto the trust framework that allows data to be shared and technical assistance funds to be disbursed.

Challenges also exist due to the makeup of the Connecticut agencies involved in the HIE project. There is an increased amount of complexity because funds need to flow from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to the Department of Social Services (DSS) to OHS to Connie that requires more time to negotiate than might otherwise be the case. Further, CMS took nine months for IAPD approval as compared to their normal two months. The net result is that Connie has been unable to achieve required resource levels to advance at the pace that was planned.

Next Steps & Project Milestones:

Connie will be looking to bring on an Executive Director and select the integration engine to work with the CDAS solution. Connie will be establishing a contract with OHS as well as other state agencies including UConn Health and UConn AIMS for services. Services will continue to be spun up along with the onboarding and launching of a pilot program. Onboarding entities will legally connect, technically connect, and execute two use cases to join the network of networks. The Technical Assistance program will be in place to allow entities throughout the state to join the HIE. Connie will continue to onboard entities throughout 2020 and 2021. The Connie website will be formally launched and provide information to the public on the benefits of the state's health information exchange.