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State agencies pledge to share data to provide better services to Illinoisans

13 Illinois State Agencies Sign Enterprise Memorandum of Understanding

CHICAGO - Thirteen state agencies that are members of the State's Health and Human Service enterprise announced the signing of an Enterprise Memorandum of Understanding (eMOU) for inter-agency data sharing. The eMOU will correct the many problems that arise from a lack of information sharing by state agencies.

"While many people interact with multiple health and human service agencies in Illinois, our current "siloed" data structure means that each agency only sees the customers' use of services for their particular programs," DHS Secretary James Dimas said. "Consequently, we have great difficulty assessing how the lifetime use of health and human services programs impact the total well-being of individuals and families. The eMOU provides the opportunity for Illinois' health and human service agencies to share data with each other and thereby understand how we can optimize human potential through our collective resources."

The eMOU works to accomplish three things:

- to enable customer-centric service delivery, providing information tailored to a citizen's needs;
- to assist effective strategic policymaking, offering executives trustworthy data to make informed decisions;
- and to encourage efficient program management, leading to increased productivity of State employees.

Illinois is in the midst of an IT transformation to modernize its systems to provide state services more quickly and at a lower cost. Due to aging systems that cannot communicate with each other - particularly in the case of our human services agencies - residents must call multiple agencies to find information or sign up for services. Often they will fill out a paper form, travel to the offices of another agency, and then fill out another paper form with identical information. When secure, inter-agency data sharing is an option, the current system constitutes a tremendous waste of taxpayer time and money. The eMOU begins to work on correcting this problem.

"This eMOU is a major step forward in providing better services to the taxpayers of Illinois," said Hardik Bhatt, State Chief Information Officer and Secretary-designate of the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT). "More than a dozen agencies agreeing to share data to improve services for taxpayers while creating a more efficient work product is historic, and to have done this in only seven months is equally significant."

The agencies involved in this eMOU are: the Department of Aging, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Employment Security, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Innovation and Technology, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Central Management Services.

Several other states have implemented similar umbrella data sharing agreements to facilitate standardized inter-agency data sharing.

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