Everyone Has a Top 2018, Even CNSI

It's the week between Christmas and the New Year. Everyone is busy recovering from food coma, planning gift certificate buying, and—of course—sharing their top moments of 2018. So, we thought we'd share our own…

One of our goals as a company is to ensure the well-being and happiness of our employees. Over the last year, we planned numerous in-office activities and philanthropic events to continue making CNSI a great place to work, while valuing what we can give back thanks to our iCare program. Here's a list of just a few of our favorites from 2018:

10. Hosting quarterly wellness events at each project site, including self-defense and nutrition classes, health fairs, and desk meditation;
9. Participating in multiple technology and engineering career fairs, including the annual MD Bio Foundation, Inc. ATLAS event;
8. Hosting over 100 'agents of change' our third annual (super fun, super cool) Bring Your Kids to Work Day event;
7. Honoring Veterans Memorial Day and Veterans Day through recognition and donations to local Veteran-focused organizations, including Fisher House and VFW Chapters;
6. Supporting disaster relief efforts from the flooding in Kerala, India to the 2018 tropical storms to the California fires; and
5. Celebrating the World Cup Tournament with ice cream, treats, and time with colleagues.

Having fun isn't the only thing we accomplished over the last twelve months. When it comes to recognition, the company

reached new heights, including:

4. Receiving the [Alliance for Workplace Excellence Seal of Approval](#) (third consecutive year);
3. Winning the Maryland Tech Council's [Government Contracting Company of the Year](#) Award; and
2. Receiving the [FedHealthIT's Innovation Award](#) for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid's (CMS) NextGen Encounter Data Processing System (EDPS)

However, we'd continue to write [below the fold](#) if we listed every accomplishment of 2018. So, we will close with our biggest, most important accomplishment of the year…

1. Delivering innovative healthcare information technology that supports better care, better health at a lower cost to over 30 million Americans.

We did this in 2018 by managing modernized Medicaid Management Information Systems (MMIS) in four states, expanding our MMIS solutions to [new clients](#), building our [Opioid Predictive Analytics](#) tool, and developing the nation's first-ever, best-in-show, [Electronic Cause of Death application](#) for the state of New Hampshire. With all of this momentum over the last year and [our new CEO](#), Todd Stottlemyer, taking the reins, there is no limit to what we can accomplish, provide and innovate in 2019. We look forward to reading your top ten and seeing you in the new year!

A Focus on Leadership

It goes without saying, 2018 was a BIG year for CNSI. We continue to innovate and evolve in the Health IT space with the agility of a small start-up—even though we are now nearly 1,000 employees spread across the globe. This year has brought with it a [new ownership team](#), [new contracts](#), [industry awards](#), and—most recently—a [new CEO](#), Todd Stottlemyer. With all that change, it's important to maintain a focus on the importance of leadership as a stabilizing force throughout the organization.

Last week, Todd held an introductory all-employee town hall in which he introduced CNSI to his vision for the company as he becomes its new steward. He described working with employees up and down the corporate ladder to deeply understand CNSI's culture and operations. When asked by one of the employees what Todd's vision is for evolving CNSI's culture, his response was not only strategic but heartfelt.

> *"Importantly, I start with creating a team of strong, servant leaders. And what this means is having leaders that are empathetic, good listeners, and understand that we are here to serve. Whether that is serving employee base, serving clients, serving their customers. When leaders lead, you have a strong culture and people will follow." – Todd Stottlemyer, CNSI CEO*

To reinforce the leadership theme that has permeated the last quarter of 2018, we held an all-day Technology leadership meeting this week. The day offered CNSI's Technology leadership team a chance to learn from one another in a relaxed, collaborative environment. Featuring sessions like "voice of leadership," "leadership in a matrixed environment," and "role of a resource manager," the event tailored the lessons directly to CNSI's work environment.

At CNSI, we understand that leadership requires constant attention and care. And developing the next generation of leaders doesn't just

happen on its own. We're committed to being around to improve the delivery and cost of health care for a long time, so we're going to maintain our focus on leadership, day-in, day-out. This concept of leadership has and will continue to be an area of focus as we enter into the new year, begin new work, create new innovations.

CMS at NAMD: The Call for Better Mental Health Treatment

In the opening keynote session for the annual [National Association of Medicaid Directors](#) (NAMD) [Conference](#), Health and Human


Services Director, Alex Azar, focused heavily on the state of mental health in America. Specifically, he shared tragic stories of opioid addiction, staggering statistics on children with serious emotional disturbances, and the overall role Medicaid plays in addressing these critical public health issues.

It was also in this speech where Mr. Azar [announced](#) the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) expansion of its mental health treatment services—all with the goal of helping children and adults who have been diagnosed receive treatment earlier and in a better environment than before. The letter from CMS details existing and new opportunities for states for the ways in which they provide mental health services. By expanding this program, states can now authorize payment for

short-term residential treatment with the commitment there will be quality care and upgrades to community-based services. But the expansion of services comes with a caveat.

"CMS is committed to providing more treatment options for serious mental illness (SMI), including more inpatient and residential options. However, states must also demonstrate their ability to address challenges—such as effectively fighting the raging opioid epidemic," said Mr. Azar in his opening remarks.
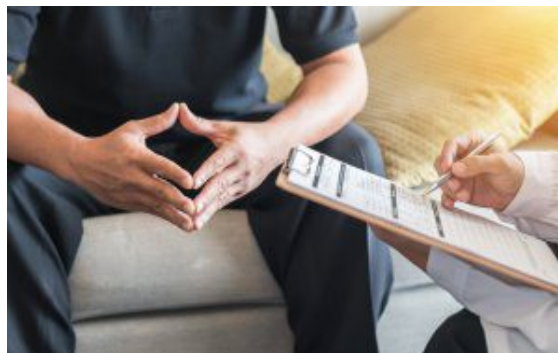
Clearly, this is an important area of focus for state Medicaid directors with [nearly half](#) of the program's spending going towards treatment for enrollees with behavioral health conditions. Even with this large number, many adults who struggle with a SMI—thirty-five percent still [do not receive treatment](#).

So, yes. CMS can lead the charge by expanding this program. But it will be up to states to determine how they will close the gap on the country's pressing mental health issues. Maybe this is why there were three additional sessions at NAMD focused specifically on this topic.

We commend CMS and NAMD for their focus in this area and look forward to seeing how this program helps states better the care CMS help better the care provided for a once undervalued field of healthcare. This step in the right direction will positively impact communities nationwide.

Elections, Compliance & Culture: What a Week!

The U.S. just recently went through the [2018 mid-term elections](#), with voting day always occurring on the [first Tuesday](#) in November. But there is another national campaign that takes place the first week of this month—[National Corporate Compliance and Ethics Week](#) (NCCEW). Oddly enough, the two go hand-in-hand, especially for those in government contracting. With the first, the American people celebrate their right to choose candidates that best reflect their values. With the second, companies—such as CNSI—use this week to celebrate their own corporate values and their commitment to doing the business the right way—every day. And this comes from creating a [strong culture](#) of compliance.

So, how does a company create that culture?

Well, here at CNSI we incorporate compliance and ethics into everything we do—from the proposals we write, to the way we manage our projects, to the treatment of our employees, colleagues and clients to the communications we send. Throughout the year, we hold related trainings on hot compliance issues (e.g., creating a harassment-free workplace); schedule chat and chews for managers; and provide regular updates on company policies and best practices. NCCEW gives us the opportunity to [spotlight the efforts](#) from the

past year.

Speaking of years, we are in now on our fourth year of NCCEW participation. Throughout the week, CNSI has shared daily policy reminders, invited employees to play our "Escape Room" compliance quiz, updated our Code of Ethics and Business Conduct, and distributed our annual Code of Ethics training. Tomorrow, we close out the week with our Compliance Champion Celebration. Since compliance is everyone's responsibility, everyone is a champion—which means cupcakes, cool giveaways, and time with colleagues.

We also check in on other companies to see how they are supporting NCCEW. Have something cool and interesting your company is doing to create a culture of compliance? Share with us at @CNSICorp!

NASCIO 2018: Cloud Technology? Easier Said Than Done

Every year, the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) holds a conference to meet with representatives from federal, municipal, international government and non-profit organizations. Chief Information Officers (CIO) from all 50 states discuss industry challenges, best practices, and upcoming policy initiatives.
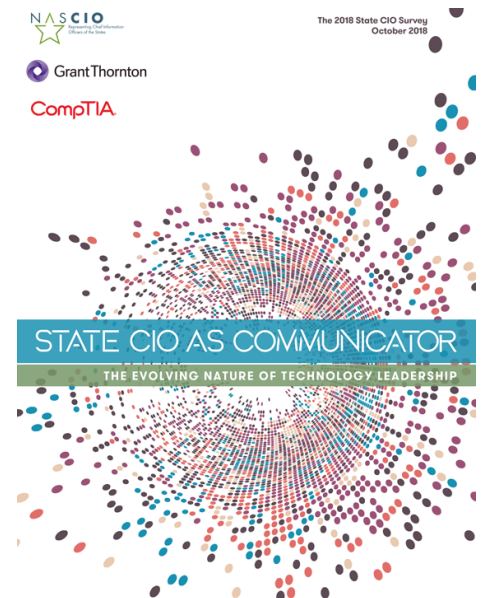
CNSI representatives heard first hand about the key issues facing CIOS, which include cybersecurity concerns, cloud adoption, impactful leadership, and up-and-coming technology.

One particularly noteworthy event was the release of the 2018 State CIO as Communicator: The Evolving Nature of Technology Leadership report, which focused—in part—on state cloud adoption. It is worth noting that 22 percent of officials have no plan in place.

According to the survey, cloud implementation has shown to be more difficult because of the work required to train employees on the new systems. An anonymous CIO respondent said in the survey that integrating the cloud system "Sounds great, and it is, but one thing it is not, is easy! There is so much more work involved than we anticipated." As technology advances, states without a cloud strategy are missing out on significant savings, increased security, and other advantages.

Does your organization have a strategy to migrate legacy applications to the cloud?

41% | Yes, cloud migration strategy in place

37% | No, but cloud migration strategy in development

22% | No cloud migration strategy planned

The State of Michigan and CNSI understood the potential beyond cloud technology long before it was an industry buzz word, with their 2016 NASCIO award-winning [Medicaid As A Service](#) program. One of the top areas of focus as this initiative launched was governance. This means identifying clear roles, creating strong contract relationships, and leveraging pre-existing resources. So, yes. Cloud implementations require work, but they can be done (and done well).

We will watch closely as state CIOs move forward with cloud adoption in other areas of government and be excited to see what advancements will be made before the next NASCIO conference.

HIMSS NHIT Week: Nine Trends, One Theme

In early October, HIMSS celebrated [National Health IT Week](#). With webinars, in-person meetings, and multiple articles daily, there was quite a bit of content to cover. This content was collected and analyzed as part of a [recent report](#) that explored trends in the healthcare industry, which fell into nine categories:
* Electronic Health Records (EHR) * Cloud Computing * Interoperability * Blockchain * Telehealth * Supply Chain * Precision Medicine * Security * Patient-Generated Health Data

Despite the variety of focus areas, one common theme cropped up across all: integrated technology. While HIMSS and other leaders in healthcare IT recognize the advances made (e.g. paperless claims, blockchain etc.), they also recognize that these advancements can cause more complex issues. The biggest challenge being that the infrastructure of yesterday cannot support the needs of tomorrow.

"People are looking up and saying the infrastructure we put in place ten years ago isn't robust enough today," said [Blain Newton](), executive vice president of HIMSS Analytics. *"What we're seeing as far as a state of the market is acceleration beyond the EHR."*

For example, while EHRs are close to be universally adopted, only 2 percent of hospitals have a single-vendor enterprise with the average healthcare system connects with 15 vendors across all its business verticals. The lack of consistency between systems brings about the topic of interoperability, as made apparent with recent [healthcare giant mergers]() such as CHI/Dignity and CVS Health/Aetna.

But—as we always say here at CNSI—where there is a challenge, there is an opportunity; where there is an opportunity, there is innovation.

Apparently HIMSS CEO Hal Wolf agrees. He recently announced that the organization will partner with with [AcademyHealth]() on

the next [Health Datapalooza](#) event to "ensure the secure and meaningful transformation of data into new capabilities that deliver innovation in health transformation." We look forward to seeing what comes out of this event.

What do you think will help address this issue of integrated technology? Join the conversation on Twitter by tweeting along with [@CNSICorp](#).

New Legislation, New Technologies: Addressing the Opioid Crisis

To counter our country's opioid crisis, the government has been fighting to push the [Support for Patients and Communities Act](#) into a law, which would address the opioid epidemic by providing Medicaid recipients easier ways to receive inpatient care for substance abuse, blocking fentanyl from being imported through the mail and allowing more nurses to prescribe medication for opioid addiction.

The opioid crisis has affected millions of people worldwide. According to the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#), there were nearly 70,000 overdose deaths across the country in 2017. In late September, a group of bipartisan committee

leaders made a statement after the House and Senate reached an agreement on the bill [saying](), "while there is more work to be done, this bipartisan legislation takes an important step forward and will save lives."

To echo what the committee leaders said, we know the only way to combat this issue impacting the country is by working together to develop innovative solutions. Like the one being used in the State of Michigan, where [91 Americans]() die every day from an opioid overdose.

CNSI's Sharif Hussein highlighted this breakthrough technology in a recent blog, "*[Making Communities Healthier: Health IT and the Opioid Addiction Crisis]()*", published as part of HIMSS National Health IT Week. This tool uses predictive analytics to identify patterns in our cloud-based Medicaid system that could be help identify potential addictive behavior. After that, specific medical claims are flagged for further manual review by the state's management team and help hold irresponsible prescribers accountable.

Both this new legislation and solutions—like the one being used in Michigan—are key to helping prevent opioid addiction. Together, we are creating healthier individuals, communities, and country.

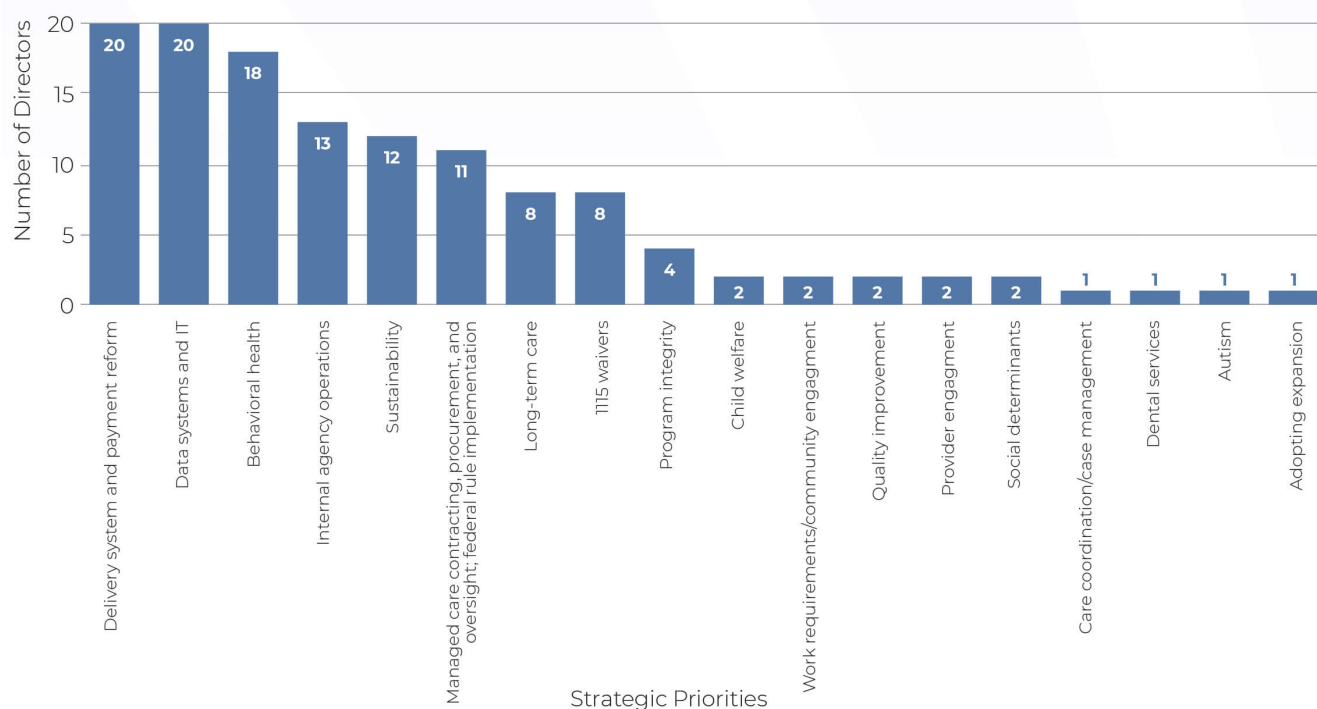# NAMD Survey Shines Spotlight on MMIS Modularity

It is well-known in the health industry that the inner-workings of Medicaid are complex—at best. In an attempt to identify and improve on these complexities, the [National Association of Medicaid Directors](#) (NAMD) issues an annual survey. For the fiscal year of 2017, 45 states participated, with the [results recently published](#) by NAMD. This report highlights the common issues in Medicaid that span across state lines. When all is said and done, there were four key challenges that Medicaid programs face:

* Addressing the increased public scrutiny, pressure and accountability
* Managing the transition to value-based care
* Combating high leadership turnover
* Operating a program that relies heavily on sister agencies and external contractors

The entire report provides high-value insights into the country's single largest source of public health coverage. However, here at CNSI, we were particularly interested in *"Strategic Priorities of Medicaid Directors".* In this section, NAMD uncovered through the state's responses the top priorities that will shape the agency work, with delivery system and payment reform, data systems and IT, and behavioral health being the top three.

Figure 8: Strategic Priorities That Will Shape Agency Work in the Coming Year

Chart: Number of Directors (y-axis) vs Strategic Priorities (x-axis)

Strategic Priority	Number of Directors
Delivery system and payment reform	20
Data systems and IT	20
Behavioral health	18
Internal agency operations	13
Sustainability	12
Managed care contracting, procurement, and oversight; federal rule implementation	11
Long-term care	8
1115 waivers	8
Program integrity	4
Child welfare	2
Work requirements/community engagment	2
Quality improvement	2
Provider engagment	2
Social determinants	2
Care coordination/case management	1
Dental services	1
Autism	1
Adopting expansion	1

As the first company in the nation to build a fully modular, compliant Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS), we know the value of modularity and incremental modernization. So, it came as no surprise that nearly 58% of respondents indicated that their state is in the modular procurement process. Two additional themes that spread across all mentions of MMIS Modularity were as follows:

"First, Directors voiced a desire to have their agencies work with an array of public and private partners to make modularity a reality. Some of the partners most often named by Directors included client service centers, pharmacy operations managers, benefit managers, and contract administrators for special populations. Second, Directors expressed commitment to a staggered, piecemeal approach to implementing modularity."

And the upcoming NAMD Fall Conference will provide the perfect platform for states to discuss Medicaid modularity and other key topics. With a jammed packed agenda, we look forward to listening to your challenges and your success stories. See you in November!

September: Hurricane Season and National Preparedness Month

September is [National Preparedness Month](#) (NPM), awareness efforts could not come at a more opportune time as Hurricane Florence hits the East Coast. In 2017, during the devasting Hurricanes Harvey, Rita, and Irma, CNSI employees stepped up and helped areas impacted. Overall, we donated $20,000 to Global Giving and assisted over 500 families rebuild their homes. This year, we stand at the ready to support those impacted by pending Hurricane Florence.

We are also building awareness and sharing tips on how our employees—and their families—can [#PrepareNow](#). Here are a few of the highlights that we wanted to share with our readers.

Tip 1: Make a Disaster Plan

There's no schedule for when a disaster may strike, so making sure everyone is on the same page with a disaster plan is vital. The best way to do this is by sitting down with your family and making sure you have a plan for where to go, what to do, and how you'll get in contact with each other for multiple scenarios.

Tip 2: Learn Skills that Can Save Lives

Knowing how to respond during a high-stress moment and possibly save a life is an important ability to have. Attend or host a local CPR event and visit the FEMA website for what to do before help arrives. Also, make sure you're preparing your home for a disaster. Check the batteries in fire alarms, purchase a carbon monoxide detector and be aware of how to turn off the gas in your home.

Tip 3: Check Your Coverage

If a disaster hits your home, insurance is there to help you pick up the pieces. As we're in hurricane season, now is the best time to check with your home insurance and make sure you're covered for floods and fires. There's never a bad time to check and get better coverage.

Tip 4: Financially Plan

Emergency savings were created for a rainy day. That is especially true during hurricane season. Make sure you're putting enough money away in case of an emergency. Start by completing an [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit](#) and going through realistic costs and concerns with your family.

What are you doing to prepare in case of an emergency? Share your helpful tips by tweeting @CNSICorp using the hashtag: #PrepareNow.

Medicaid. Transformed (via Andy Slavitt).

Medicaid beneficiaries represent the nation's most in-need patient group. They also represent a demographic that could benefit the most from health IT innovation. That is why [Andy Slavitt](#), former administrator for The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) has created a two-year initiative, [The Medicaid Transformation Project](#). At its core, the goal of this effort is to identify, create, and spread access to creative solutions that will improve the health of underserved individuals and save providers money.

Slavitt will lead a group of seventeen major health systems dedicated to targeting four key areas: behavioral health, substance use disorder, women and infant care and avoidable emergency department visits. "The current healthcare system fails the people who need it most," Slavitt said in a [press](#)

[release](#) announcing the project's launch. "Our work will be to deepen and refine the best innovations and then implement them at an accelerated pace at providers across the country."

To start, the project will assemble core groups at each hospital who will be tasked with identifying and sharing best practices across the seventeen systems. Although our work here at CNSI focuses on payors and providers, we are excited that the Medicaid Transformation Project is taking things on from the care side. Hopefully, together, we'll make meaningful advances in health outcomes for the Medicaid population.

For a complete download on how the project will operate and measure success, check out this additional write-up from [Healthcare Informatics](#).

How do you think the Medicaid Transformation Project will impact healthcare in this country? Join the conversation at @CNSICorp.