Picking Your Path to CCWIS Compliance
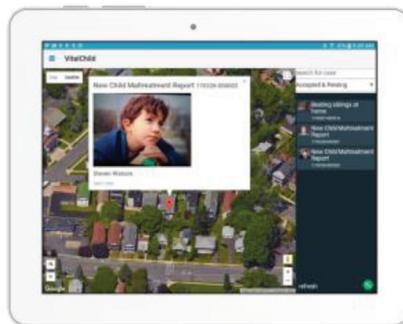
Suffering from *paralysis* by analysis when it comes to decisions on alignment with the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) rules? If so, you are not alone. Collecting troves of data, putting these data to work in a more evidence-based approach, and sharing across agencies, can be bewildering for the thousands of administrators and practitioners seeking a compliant information technology (IT) solution.

The real challenge rests on deciding which direction to go, keeping in mind the August 2018 compliance deadline.

You have three paths to follow:

1. **Stay the course.** If you are willing to risk the amount received and efficiency with which payments are made to your state, you can maintain your Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). But before taking this uncertain path of least resistance, consider this: Is the two-decade-old system, designed before the advent of mobile computing, really doing the job it should?

2. **Retrofit existing systems.** As earlier efforts remind us, reworking an existing legacy system may not get you where you want to go and may create as much work—if not more—than adopting a new system. Normalizing disparate data types, integrating proprietary technology, and orchestrating the entire project are efforts often requiring highly experienced IT vendors accustomed to meeting the complex compliance needs of the public sector.

3. **Modernize with an end-to-end solution.** Sometimes, starting fresh is the best way. You can adopt a modern system that meets and exceeds CCWIS requirements by selecting among many of the new commercial off-the-shelf and cloud-based solutions. These systems can transform your current workflow and replace the dozen or more components that comprise an existing SACWIS-based system.

A mockup of VitalChild's MDYA solution.

A Road to Change Through Technology

If you decide to pick the modernization route, recognize that you will be doing more than swapping out technology; you will be instituting a comprehensive solution with lasting benefits for a populace in dire need of your help—children and their families. This third alternative may be quicker to implement, and often more affordable in the long run.

An approach that allows caseworkers to make contextual decisions based upon real-time and relevant data sources can be life-changing for both staff and clients.

As psychologists with decades of experience working with kids in child welfare and juvenile justice, my colleagues and I spent years looking for technology to build such a system providing a comprehensive outcomes monitoring platform.

We teamed with Oracle and Helix Business Solutions to build a combined cloud-based modular IT solution called *VitalChild* (*https://vitalchild.solutions*). Utilizing our Multi-Dimensional Youth Assessment (MDYA360) system, *VitalChild* is designed to help you meet CCWIS standards.

Unlike most assessment systems, *VitalChild's* cloud-based solution offers on demand automated reporting, case management technology, and instant access to assessments tools and management forms—all connected to portable individual youth portfolios and facility performance reports. *VitalChild's* Case Management and MDYA360 assessment facilitate real-time quality data collection and sharing across all agencies.

For those in children services, foster care, juvenile justice, and residential treatment, *VitalChild* turns laptops, tablets, and smartphones into mobile evidenced-based organizers. *VitalChild* empowers case management by collecting trauma-informed information from the field, storing images, scheduling, and tracking events to improve efficiencies and engagement of services. *VitalChild's* MDYA360 assessment tools, automated reporting features, and emergency alert systems are designed to identify needs as they arise, informing the right type and amount of support needed, when it's needed.

Powered by the OracleService Cloud, *VitalChild's* holistic 360-degree perspective monitors outcomes for

Image via Helix Business Solutions

children, parents/guardians, families, facilities, and youth homes. Unlike SACWIS data stockpiling systems, *VitalChild* continuously analyzes the information and data collected, and uses this evidence to produce predictive algorithms for foster care and residential treatment placement.

VitalChild is an excellent example of the new comprehensive systems and packaged solutions available today. Such modern approaches and adaptive modules illustrate how pursuing a third path to CCWIS compliance turns your efforts from reactionary to strategically preventive.

The Cost of Doing Nothing

Past SACWIS endeavors have cost some states more than $100 million to implement, and in some cases have taken years to become operational.

Keeping the CCWIS 2018 deadline in mind, meeting and exceeding CCWIS expectations is well within your reach. Current technologies offer you more affordable and comprehensive cloud-based modular systems, improving efficiency and security to help you keep a pulse on every family and child's well-being. And in the end, isn't that really what matters most?

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