

IBM Center for The Business of Government

A Practitioner's Framework for Measuring Results:

Using "C-Stat" at the Colorado
Department of Human Services

Melissa Wavelet

A Practitioner's Framework for Measuring Results: Using "C-Stat" at the Colorado Department of Human Services

Melissa Wavelet

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction: Building a New Performance Framework	7
Design: Creating New Routines	11
Implementation: Giving Leaders Five "New Levers"	20
Leadership: Changing Organizational Culture	26
Influencing: Increasing County and Contractor Performance	30
Connecting: Performance Management, Evaluation, and Evidence	36
Results: Program Achievements and Organizational Benefits	40
Appendices	47
About the Author	48
Key Contact Information	49
Reports from the IBM Center for The Business of Government	50

FOREWORD

On behalf of the IBM Center for The Business of Government, we are pleased to present this report, *A Practitioner's Framework for Measuring Results: Using "C-Stat" at the Colorado Department of Human Services*, by Melissa Wavelet, the former Director of the Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes, at the Colorado Department of Human Services.

This report is intended to help leaders of large, complex organizations learn from State-based experiences in measuring results. It is a first-person account based on the author's experiences over the past 10 years in several different state agencies.

This report addresses issues similar to those discussed in past IBM Center reports that explored a management phenomenon often called "PerformanceStat," which has evolved in hundreds of governmental units at the federal, state, and local levels across the U.S. over the past 25 years. Paul O'Connell's 2001 report, *Using Performance Data for Accountability: The New York City Police Department's CompStat Model of Police Management*, describes the pioneer creation of this performance management framework that eventually became known as PerformanceStat. Robert Behn's 2007 report, *What All Mayors Would Like to Know About Baltimore's CitiStat Performance Strategy* offers advice to city leaders on how to implement this approach, and a 2011 report by Harry Hatry and Elizabeth Davies, *A Guide to Data-Driven Performance Reviews*, offers advice to federal agency leaders on how to implement this approach.

While this report is intended as a guide for measuring performance in state agencies, it has relevance to performance measurement in other large public sector organizations as well. The author describes the evolution of C-Stat as a management framework for over a seven-year period, and offers concrete and actionable advice on the dynamics of using such an approach. She also describes how practitioners might leverage this type of measurement framework to bridge performance management and program evaluation disciplines in a way that can create greater insights for agencies—providing agency leaders with more data to focus on near-term performance issues and longer-term program outcomes.

We hope agencies at all levels of government find this report useful inspiration in efforts to improve the measurement of performance and results.



DANIEL J. CHENOK



MYLES LYNCH

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Chenok".

Daniel J. Chenok
Executive Director
IBM Center for The Business of Government
chenokd@us.ibm.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Lynch".

Myles Lynch
Vice President, State, Local & Education
IBM Public Service
myles.lynch@us.ibm.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the implementation of the C-Stat management framework in Colorado's Department of Human Services (CDHS) over a seven-year period, and how it changed the way the department and its county and contractor partners measured performance.

The report is framed as a guide for others who may want to institute a similar approach in their agency—whether at the federal, state, or local levels.

Designing the New C-Stat Routines. C-Stat was based on a nationally recognized framework of performance management routines that evolved over the past 25 years and is commonly called "PerformanceStat." This approach is used in hundreds of cities and other government organizations across the globe. It is comprised of a set of administrative routines for collecting, analyzing, deciding, and acting upon performance information on a regular basis and involving top organizational leaders. But having a set of routines is different than using the routines to drive results. This report focuses on how C-Stat helped CDHS to improve performance measurement; how C-Stat routines have helped improve the way the department, counties, and contractors work; and what lessons this experience brings to other public sector organizations seeking to enhance performance measurement and management.

Several key findings emerge from C-Stat experience that could be adapted by government agencies.

Implementation Gives Leaders New Levers for Change. C-Stat routines resulted in five new levers for change, including:

- Purpose, which can help leaders and staff understand why they do their work
- Comparisons, which facilitate learning from others to understand what can be done differently to improve performance
- Information, which can accelerate learning and improve performance
- Recognition, which use data to recognize good performance that motivates staff
- Follow-up, which maintains momentum

These routines and levers provided the department with a new focus on the use of data and learning. This ultimately helped top, mid-level, and front-line managers to be more strategic, problem-solving, and focus on measuring the outcomes and outputs that define success.

Performance Improves Among Counties and Contractors. C-Stat has helped everyone—including county and contractor partners—to engage in a data-driven dialogue focused on improving performance. This results in increased ownership of the challenges faced and data-driven dialogues, as well as the use of what is learned from the data to prioritize action.

For example, CDHS recognizes county performance based on an annual roll-up of performance measures across all county-facing programs. Those counties that meet performance targets at least 75 percent of the time are honored as a Distinguished Performer for that year. In 2017,

20 counties achieved this standard. The number of counties has grown each year as counties make more progress and achieve more goals.

Performance Management Connects with Evaluation and Evidence. The intersection between performance management routines, outcome monitoring efforts, and research and evaluation or evidence-based models is not often discussed in government. However, C-Stat addresses this intersection squarely and incorporates the results of longer-term research and evaluation into day-to-day operations and meetings to provide context and strategic direction for decision making. Doing this required leadership commitment, organizational links between operational and research offices, and incorporation of research and evaluation into the process in a way that supports program managers.

Program Results Emerge. Of the various C-Stat measures developed over the past seven years, 53 percent represent outcomes and 47 percent represent outputs. Of the 203 C-Stat measures to date, 130 have demonstrated progress, resulting in a 64 percent improvement rate. Performance has been sustained for at least six consecutive months for more than 20 measures resulting in a C-Stat award to those involved. The C-Stat approach led to significant improvements in diverse program areas such as:

- A virtual elimination of the use of seclusion for mental health patients
- A doubling in the number of children receiving child care subsidies
- An increase in the number of youth in correctional facilities who attain a GED or high school diploma, from 82 percent to more than 90 percent
- A near doubling of timely monthly contacts for at-risk adults, from 54 percent to 95 percent

The C-Stat approach also resulted in benefits for the operation of the department, by fostering better data, more actionable measures, and clearer program goals. This contributed to better accountability and an organizational culture of continuous learning and improvement.

INTRODUCTION: BUILDING A NEW PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Government administrators and policymakers have long pursued various strategies to make government more efficient and effective.

One strategy that is increasingly common is the use of performance management or outcome tracking systems. "Effective performance management systems regularly track and report state-wide or agency-level progress on key indicators to help determine whether government programs are working as intended."¹

A 2018 Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative study, *The Role of Outcome Monitoring in Evidence-Based Policymaking*, observes that states vary widely on the design and use of performance frameworks. The study highlights key ways states are using performance data to improve programs and services, inform budget and policy decisions, and ensure accountability. "Governments can use performance measurement systems to ensure accountability as well as to inform policy, programmatic, and funding decisions. These systems differ considerably based on the type of data reported, the intended audience and how the data are used."²

The study outlines four types of performance frameworks commonly used by government leaders:

- **Performance dashboards.** A public website that tracks and reports performance on key government priorities.
- **Performance meetings.** Uses performance data to identify problems and inform solutions within agencies and across government.
- **Report cards and scorecards.** Performance rating or score on specific indicators within an agency.
- **Performance budgeting.** Agency performance data is reported alongside budget information.

Many governments use a mix of these approaches, as will be seen in the case study of a large state agency that follows:

Study Objective

This report describes how one large, state human services agency developed a new performance framework to monitor outcomes, inform strategies for improvement, and increase transparency and accountability. The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) launched its new performance approach, which it calls "C-Stat," in January 2012. C-Stat combines monthly performance meetings focused on outcome data with county and contractor scorecards and public reports.

1. The Pew Charitable Trusts, *The Role of Outcome Monitoring in Evidence-Based Policymaking: How States Can Use Performance Management Systems to Achieve Results*: August 16, 2018. 1.


2. Ibid., p 3, Table 1.

The State of Colorado's Performance Framework

Although C-Stat is exclusive to CDHS, the agency operates within the larger Colorado state government environment. In December 2018, the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative published *Colorado Dives into Evidence-Based Policymaking*, a study that describes how Colorado government leaders think about evidence and data. This includes compliance with the State Measurement for Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent Government (SMART) Act that the Colorado legislature passed in 2013. The SMART Act requires each state agency, including CDHS, to create an annual Department Performance Plan and to present progress and results at a legislative hearing in addition to publicly reporting performance on a quarterly basis. C-Stat informs the department's annual plan and the outcome measures are one in the same for quarterly reporting.

In addition, the Governor's office created a Vision 2018 Dashboard. This public document provides a summary of how Colorado is doing across its five priorities that fulfill the vision of a truly healthy Colorado across its people, economy, communities, and environment. Again, CDHS agency-level measures that are monitored and managed through C-Stat were aligned with and included in the statewide Vision 2018 Dashboard.

Lastly, Colorado is one of many states that is partnering with the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative to implement an innovative evidence-based policymaking approach that helps it invest in policies and programs that are proven to work. The Colorado Governor's Office is advancing the use of research, evidence, implementation science, and cost-benefit analysis in state decision-making processes. CDHS programs that have been reviewed as part of this approach touch on juvenile justice, child welfare, behavioral health, and prevention issues. These reviews have informed the annual budget development process, policymaking decisions, and strategies for improvement in C-Stat.



As the former chief of staff for Colorado Governor and Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper and former head of Denver County Human Services, I can attest to the administration bringing a steadfast commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable Coloradans. We worked closely with the Governor's cabinet to advance his agenda and this included Executive Director Reggie Bicha at the Department of Human Services. He prioritized performance management and using data to continuously improve outcomes for children and families. Conversations in C-Stat meetings informed legislative and budget decisions, supported county departments of human services and kept leadership focused on quantifiable results. This effort at measuring and transparency was replicated by other state departments.

—Roxane White, President, Strategy with Rox



REPORT METHODOLOGY

Three sources of information inform this report:

- Observation of the performance management leadership strategy over a seven-year period
- Foundational material, including the templates, schedules, materials, awards, and outputs listed in the Appendix
- Stakeholder interviews with departmental executive leadership, C-Stat program managers, and performance analysts

The report was designed to answer the following questions:

- What are the lessons for leadership and staff in other large, complex public service agencies who want to use existing data to improve decision-making and outcomes?
- What are the explicit design principles and operational components to an effective and enduring PerformanceStat leadership strategy?
- What role does leadership play?
- Has C-Stat enabled CDHS to use data to improve measurement of outcomes? What outcomes can be achieved for customers?
- Has C-Stat influenced how CDHS does business with its employees, contractors, and county partners?
- How has C-Stat changed the way CDHS engages evaluation and evidence to improve outcomes?

Overview of Colorado's Department of Human Services

The Colorado Department of Human Services connects Coloradans to assistance, resources, and support for living independently. They are the people who help people. Its mission is:

Collaborating with our partners, our mission is to design and deliver high-quality human and health services that improve the safety, independence, and well-being of the people of Colorado.

As the agency responsible for serving vulnerable Coloradans, often when people are at their worst, CDHS oversees human services operations across the state. There are five programmatic offices that oversee the implementation of more than 25 human service programs. This includes the care and well-being of customers in four different facility types across multiple locations throughout the state. These include:

- Four Regional Centers for developmentally and intellectually disabled adults
- Two Mental Health Institutes for chronically mentally ill adults
- Ten state-secure facilities for at-risk youth
- Five Veterans Community Living Centers for elderly veterans and their spouses

In addition, there are two administrative offices that manage the facilities, funding, technology, workforce, contracts, quality assurance, and audit oversight to the department. These services are delivered with the help of approximately 5,000 employees, hundreds of contractors and 64 county human/social services departments via an annual budget of \$2.2 billion.

In 2012, the Department launched C-Stat, a performance leadership strategy designed to tackle the various performance problems CDHS faced. It adheres to the same design principles of other PerformanceStat efforts, such as CompStat in New York City, and the original CitiStat in Baltimore, Maryland—which were extensively documented by Harvard professor Robert Behn in his 2014 book, *The PerformanceStat Potential: A Leadership Strategy for Producing Results*. Since the first C-Stat meeting in January 2012, CDHS leadership has been relying on C-Stat to measure and drive performance improvements in partnership with Colorado counties, contractors, and state employees. C-Stat has made it possible to focus on key metrics for long-term success over the past seven years, enabling CDHS to pursue progress and results while addressing immediate and pressing near-term priorities such as fiscal sanctions and audits.

PERFORMANCESTAT CORE LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

- The leadership team that is using the PerformanceStat strategy focuses on achieving specific *public purposes*.
- It seeks to eliminate or mitigate its current *performance deficit(s)* by achieving specific *performance targets*.
- It *collects* and *analyzes* current (not last year's) *data* that relate to these purposes, help reveal whether performance is improving, and provide insight into differences and changes in its performance.
- It establishes a rhythm and routine to the organization's focus on performance through a series of *regular, frequent, integrated meetings* in which the key executives and managers *analyze the data, follow up* on previous agreements, provide *feedback* on progress, seek to *learn* what is and isn't working, and decide what slight modifications or significant changes they should make in their current strategies.
- Through all this, the leadership team *persists* in its emphasis on improving performance so as to achieve specific public purposes.

Source: Robert Behn, *The PerformanceStat Potential: A Leadership Strategy for Producing Results*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2014), 28.

This report describes how CDHS has used C-Stat to accelerate learning and create continuous improvement in performance measurement, while driving improved results of services and outcomes for our customers. It can serve as a guide for any leader of a large, complex organization who wants to stay focused on what matters most to customers while handling inevitable interruptions.

This report assesses a concrete, real-life example of a leadership strategy that draws on the PerformanceStat efforts in a challenging field—human services. While C-Stat takes place in a state government agency, any leadership team could use this framework and approach—school districts, other levels of government, nonprofits, or any large organization where data and metrics can inform decisions to improve systems. This report provides operational details and attempts to make explicit some of the tacit knowledge necessary to successfully implement a strategy that follows a PerformanceStat approach.

Design: Creating New Routines





The most visible component of any PerformanceStat is the meeting.³

—Robert Behn, professor, Harvard University



The foundation for transforming a large organization's culture to be more results-oriented and performance-driven begins with creating a set of institutional routines. In the case of C-Stat, this started with defining the role of the executive leadership team and the elements of the C-Stat process. This is comprised of a set of administrative routines for collecting, analyzing, deciding, and acting upon performance information on a regular basis via a regular meeting involving top organizational leaders.

Defining the Senior Leadership Team's Role

In January 2011, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper appointed Reggie Bicha to be the executive director of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). Bicha noted, "Governor Hickenlooper really set the tone right from the beginning. He said he was going to measure everything government does and he wasn't afraid of the numbers. His approach allowed for transparency."

Bicha had previously used a performance management leadership strategy at the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, which had been dubbed "KidStat." By late 2011, Director Bicha directed that a similar performance management framework, based on the KidStat approach, be created and named it "C-Stat." He and his executive leadership team held their first C-Stat meeting in January 2012. Bicha and the department's deputy executive directors (DEDs), referred to as the executive leadership team throughout this report, were heavily involved in making C-Stat design decisions. They jointly identified and developed the initial performance measures and goals. Bicha considered each C-Stat meeting his internal management conversation with his executive leadership team. It is the one meeting dedicated to discussing the most important programmatic measures of success at that time. Everyone is expected to clear calendars to prepare for and attend the C-Stat meeting. It is not in addition to the "real" work but represents the real work.

Over the subsequent seven years, executive leadership continuously identified key performance measures and led meetings week to week. Each meeting gives CDHS staff access to executive leadership. The executive director and his deputies express their values, concerns, and preferences, which are heard by all in attendance. Executive leadership is curious, challenges the status quo and legacy practices, and aspires to what is in the best interests of those CDHS serves. This fosters a learning culture and continuous improvement. The executive time commitment to C-Stat is approximately 240 hours per year, which is about 2.5 days per month (20 hours). This type of leadership commitment and ownership has played a critical role in C-Stat's success and sustainability.

3. Robert Behn, *The PerformanceStat Potential: A Leadership Strategy for Producing Results*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2014), 38.

Organizing the Meeting

As Dr. Behn notes, the critical element of any PerformanceStat strategy is the routine meetings that track progress and serve as the interaction point for learning and next steps. Following is the design of CDHS's C-Stat meeting routine:

Room and Layout. The same conference room on the executive floor of CDHS' headquarters is used for these weekly meetings. In fact, during the 2014 renovation of the eighth floor, a new conference room was built that was designed to support the room layout, C-Stat audience size, and technology needs.

The physical layout of the room was a set of deliberate design choices. The programmatic office director stands at the podium at the front of the room, which conveys that they have primary responsibility for engaging in the dialogue. The C-Stat leadership team is seated at a U-shaped table facing the podium and screen with the Office's division directors along one side of the U-shaped table. The remaining seats are for the audience and typically include office staff who provide facility, program, or customer-specific content as prompted, as well as other CDHS staff, and visitors. The C-Stat meeting must be attended in person as no phone access is granted. By 2015, the department granted access to CDHS offices and county partners throughout the state via videoconference.



Meeting Participants. As illustrated in Figure 1, the CDHS organizational chart, the executive leadership team consists of three deputy executive directors who report to the executive director in addition to the chief legal director and the chief medical officer.

Figure 1 Colorado Department of Human Services Organizational Chart



Source: Colorado Departments of Human Services

There are seven offices, five of which are programmatic. Each of the five programmatic offices (Office of Economic Security, Office of Early Childhood, Office of Community Access and Independence, and the Office of Behavioral Health) participates in C-Stat, so there is one meeting each week and two during one week of the month.

The same executive team leaders (the executive director and the deputy executive directors), resource owners (finance, information technology, human resources, and budget) and performance management staff make up the C-Stat leadership team. If the executive director cannot attend, the deputy executive directors lead the discussion and sustain the momentum while mirroring the culture. What matters most is that it is the same people or their delegates with their decision-making authority who attend the weekly discussion. Office directors and division directors take their attendance and participation in these meetings just as seriously as any other core responsibility.

Meeting Frequency. Come floods, wildfires or media scrutiny, the C-Stat leadership team discusses performance every Wednesday from 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the same room. This translates to a monthly meeting for each of the five programmatic offices. What matters most is that the convening is regular, and becomes routine and rescheduled when necessary. To accommodate the hectic annual state budget process, C-Stat meetings are reconfigured to include just the office director, freeing up other staff time for legislative hearing preparation.



A calendar of the C-Stat meeting schedule can be found online [here](#).

An example of the preparation and slide deck production schedule can be found [here](#).

Meeting Duration. Each C-Stat meeting is 120 minutes in length for most offices. For two offices (the Office of Early Childhood and the Office of Behavioral Health), each meeting is 90 minutes long and back-to-back one Wednesday per month.

Meeting Preparation. Office directors lead the efforts to prepare for their monthly C-Stat meeting. This varies by each office but they all receive the benefit of a "Heads-up Prep" document. This document is the product of a prep meeting led by the Performance Management Division (PMD) for Executive Leadership. It is a slide by slide discussion that ranges from 30-60 minutes each week. Any questions, suggestions or concerns from the prep meeting are provided to the office director typically the day before their Wednesday meeting. Sometimes the timing of the prep and the C-Stat meeting allow for more or less time for the office to review the Heads-up Prep notes. While executive leadership was briefed on the slide deck since the beginning, it wasn't until 2013, that Heads-up Prep notes were shared with office directors. Without them, office directors were expected to respond to those questions, suggestions, or concerns in the moment of the meeting. With them, office directors could come with answers or ideas on how to find the answers or address the concerns, which has simply accelerated the monthly dialogue and progress.

Meeting Follow-Up. Regardless of meeting frequency, a critical attribute of a successful PerformanceStat approach is follow-up. Any unanswered questions or additional data or information needed for decision making is documented in a meeting's "Action Plan." Specifics of these questions, requests, or clarifications are not left to individual memories but are documented in that meeting's Plan and disseminated to office leadership/staff. Action Plans facilitate engagement and accountability as well as maintain momentum between meetings. It reinforces that work is being done in between C-Stat meetings, which naturally makes C-Stat a part of core operations.



A template of the C-Stat Action Plan can be found [here](#).

In my role as Colorado's Director of Operations I have the privilege of overseeing Governor Jared Polis' performance management approach across Colorado state government. This administration is committed to achieving bold change for all Coloradans. In order to achieve these bold goals, my team and I collaborate with each cabinet agency to develop and regularly measure objective, outcome-oriented goals.

While this is an ambitious assignment, I have the benefit of having overseen performance management at the Colorado Department of Human Services for the past two years. Through C-Stat, I became accustomed to using data to understand how operations, policies and funding affected performance across a wide range of programs throughout the state. In my role with Human Services, I served proudly as a part of an executive team that valued data-driven decision making, and a culture of learning and continuous improvement. It is this experience with C-Stat that has proven invaluable in developing and implementing measurable, attainable, ambitious goals for the Polis administration.

—Tony Gherardini, Director of Operations and Cabinet Affairs
for Colorado Governor Jared Polis

Staffing the Effort

In 2012, the executive director asked each office director to provide one full-time equivalent staff person or funds for a C-Stat performance analyst dedicated to their office but located in the Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes (OPSO). OPSO, as illustrated in Figure 1, is organizationally separate from the five programmatic offices. This configuration fosters objective analysis, as the C-Stat performance analysts do not report to the programmatic hierarchy. Instead, OPSO brings a third-party perspective and serves executive leadership and the broader organization's interests.

In 2012, four analysts were hired and dedicated to organizing data and producing the slide deck illustrating office performance over time. In the fall of 2013, a fifth analyst was hired to support the new Office of Early Childhood and two analysts dedicated to county performance were hired using existing department funds that were re-allocated from eliminated positions.

Initially, greater emphasis was placed on the technical (e.g., Excel) and analytical (e.g., statistical) skills when hiring analysts. Over the years, this emphasis has shifted to stronger interpersonal skills and an inclination to learning. When recruiting analysts, the following attributes are preferred:

- Critical and creative thinker—trusts but verifies
- Curious—questions status quo or initial explanations/answers
- Strong interpersonal skills—predisposed to collaboration and working with others
- Appreciation of data—pragmatic, and able to balance need for research/evaluation rigor with utility
- Has a sense of mission—drawn to human services in particular, understands that data represents a human story



A description of a performance analyst's job description can be found [here](#).

In addition to building centralized analyst capacity, several programmatic offices have also adjusted their staffing profiles. Traditionally, research, data, and evaluation staff within CDHS programs were expert in navigating the administrative databases (e.g., child welfare case management system, public assistance eligibility determination systems, etc.) for purposes of generating reports. Offices are now hiring analysts who can do more than meet federal reporting requirements. These roles have expanded to include analytical and evaluative skills for mining the databases to answer performance-related, research or evaluation questions. This is a shift from a compliance mindset to a curiosity mindset, from reacting to external requirements to pro-actively asking questions and seeking answers from the existing data.

HOW THE C-STAT APPROACH HELPED IMPROVE DELIVERY OF FOOD AND CASH ASSISTANCE IN THE STATE

In 2004, Colorado Legal Services and others filed a lawsuit, *Davis v. Birch and Bicha (formerly Hawthorne-Bey v. Henneberry and Beye)*, on behalf of individuals whose food and cash benefits were improperly denied or whose applications and redeterminations for assistance took longer to process than the law allowed. The Colorado Department of Human Services and the plaintiffs settled the lawsuit in 2008. The terms of the agreement required the department (CDHS) to process new food and cash assistance applications and expedited food assistance applications in a timely manner 95 percent of the time for at least 12 consecutive months. It also required the department to process food and cash assistance redeterminations—which establish whether individuals currently receiving assistance are still eligible to receive benefits—in a timely manner 95 percent of the time for at least nine consecutive months.

Since then, CDHS and its 64 county partners worked diligently to improve how quickly workers in each county department of human/social services were processing these five benefit applications and recertifications. Despite those efforts, by 2007 only about 40 percent of applications were being processed timely.

Performance was improving very slowly, yet CDHS was nowhere near meeting the ambitious terms of the settlement agreement set in 2008. So it was logical that the programmatic office responsible for improving application processing timeliness (Office of Economic Security) would include these measures in C-Stat. In 2012, timeliness of each of the applications became a measure and the performance of the 10 large counties was detailed in a line graph so that investments and strategies could be targeted and customized. The measures mirrored the terms of the settlement agreement to ensure alignment and, eventually, release.

As a result of being designated as C-Stat measures, CDHS executive, office, and program leadership were jointly engaged in finding ways to reduce the time it took county workers to process these benefit applications. It was no longer an individual county or individual program director's problem. The persistent attention month after month meant that everyone got smarter, myths were busted, hypotheses were disproven, and the operational processes across county offices were dissected and redesigned.

The CDHS executive leadership team played a critical role by securing new funding from the Colorado State Assembly. These funds were invested in fixing and modernizing the less-than-helpful technology system and to hire a contractor to work closely with counties to redesign their application processes so they would feed into the modernized state system. These multi-year investments facilitated key foundational enhancements that were necessary to make permanent performance improvements. CDHS leadership also regularly met with local county elected officials and county directors to reinforce expectations, discuss their individual county's performance, and share lessons from other counties.

From 2012 to 2015, processing times improved to the high 80s/low 90s compared to the standard. Families were getting access to food and cash assistance more quickly. As statewide performance steadily inched up, attention began to shift to achieving the 95 percent goal and sustaining it for 12 consecutive months. To further intensify efforts, these measures became a "wildly important goal" for the CDHS Executive Director in 2015-16. This simply meant more state staff attention, more time spent alongside low-performing counties, and even more examination to understand barriers to improved timeliness.

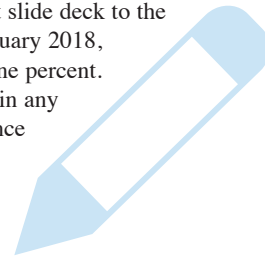
HOW THE C-STAT APPROACH HELPED IMPROVE DELIVERY OF FOOD AND CASH ASSISTANCE IN THE STATE (CONT.)

Closer collaboration, shared learning, and joint ownership between the department staff and the county staff were essential in order to be released from the settlement agreement. Program staff and the performance management staff united to provide technical assistance to counties. The department hosted a statewide summit and several regional summits that convened the counties so they could learn promising practices and procedures from each other. The 10 large counties were invited to use the business process redesign contractor to examine their lobby/in-person, electronic processes for intake and application and to eliminate waste and save customers' time. Program regional representatives and the 10 large counties met monthly to discuss current performance and barriers to achieving and maintaining the 95 percent performance target.

For the first time, in April 2016, statewide performance exceeded the 95 percent goal across all five application types. The terms of the 2008 settlement agreement were finally achieved. As a result, in January 2017, the Denver District Court terminated the long-running settlement agreement. Families across the state were getting access to food and cash assistance as quickly as one would expect.

"People who are overcoming poverty and come to us for food or cash assistance need their benefits right away," said Reggie Bicha, executive director of CDHS. "They need government services to be efficient, timely, and accurate. The old system was broken, and people waited too long to get the assistance they needed. We've worked tirelessly with the help of our county partners to create a system that works effectively for Coloradans. Today, the majority of applications can be submitted online, and applicants receive a response within 48 hours."

A few months later, all five of these C-Stat measures were moved from the C-Stat slide deck to the C-Stat Dashboard. Since then, the state continued to meet all five goals until February 2018, when timeliness for two application types dipped below 95 percent by less than one percent. This was caused by missing processing timelines for fewer than five applications in any small or medium-sized counties where the volume is lower. Since then, performance for all five measures has returned to exceeding the goal.





Implementation: Giving Leaders Five “New Levers”



Nevertheless, there do exist leadership "behaviors"...These behaviors can motivate individuals, teams, and agencies to improve performance. These behaviors are human activities, not impersonal systems."⁴

—Robert Behn, professor, Harvard University

Having a set of administrative routines in place is different than using the routines to drive results. This is the secret of success for any PerformanceStat effort. It is a leadership strategy, not an administrative process. This strategy empowers senior leaders by giving them five new "levers"—the levers of purpose, comparisons, information, recognition, and follow-up.

Lever 1: Purpose⁵

Unlike the private sector, no single overarching metric exists to evaluate public sector performance. Without concepts such as profit, it can be difficult for government agencies to be accountable to stakeholders.⁶

—Max M. Houck, University of South Florida

It might seem like an obvious place to start but a clearly stated purpose provides the direction for organizing attention, effort, and resources. There are differing levels of purpose ranging from the highest agency level (e.g., vision, mission, and values) to the level of a particular program or funding appropriation. At CDHS, the executive director and deputy executive directors publicly repeat that "CDHS will be the most effective 21st century human services agency in the country." This bold aspiration has served as a rallying cry and a reminder to staff of why they do this work. Implicit in this purpose statement is the expectation that all staff are working to improve each program or service for which CDHS is responsible. There is a deeply held belief across the executive team that government can only get better, and in fact, must get better.

In addition to this agency level purpose statement, each office identifies performance deficits and selects which to mitigate and how many deficits. Initial deficits were easy to identify since they represented operations where programs were missing the mark according to the federal funder or oversight body, state funder or oversight body, or a lawsuit. Inspired by organizational guru Franklin Covey, each year since 2013-14, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper had asked each executive director to establish up to five annual "wildly important goals" (WIGs). These goals must be measured and reported to the Governor's Office monthly, so they automatically become C-Stat measures for at least that 12-month period.

4. Behn, *The PerformanceStat Potential*, 262.

5. *Ibid.*, 36.

6. Max M. Houck, "Strategic leadership through performance management: FORESIGHT as PerformanceStat," *Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences*, (2017): 1-11.

Whether a C-Stat measure originates as a WIG or a CDHS program office develops it, each one has a specific target or goal. This can be challenging since the business of human services is inherently about human behavior and can be hard to quantify at times and even harder to influence. The nature of the human services business is less operational than repairing potholes or issuing hunting licenses.

Performance improvement is often dependent on an individual customer making behavioral changes. Changes such as finding a job, paying child support, increasing a parent's protective factors, or following a treatment plan are only possible through human change. They are not usually able to be standardized, visible, or easily predictable behaviors. Nevertheless, if it is a service, output, or outcome that is meaningful to the CDHS mission or its customers, CDHS staff navigates the intellectual maze to identify a measurable numerator and denominator and set a meaningful goal. The result has been an average of 20 C-Stat measures per office, resulting in about 100 in total across the department.

Originally, programs selected measures for which the data was already being collected and/or reported for some other purpose (e.g., federal or state oversight, research and evaluation, or a lawsuit). Executive leadership prefers developing objective measures using data rather than relying on any anecdotes or individual constituent or county story. It was easiest to start where systems and processes were and not let the perfect get in the way of the good. Over the years, CDHS has identified gaps in the data sources or administrative datasets and worked to add or adjust data fields to better capture progress toward a key goal.

One example is how the CDHS's Office of Economic Security created the ability to track the performance of what mattered most to our customers receiving cash assistance and employment services from Colorado Works, which is Colorado's name for the federally-supported Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. The federal Administration for Children and Families requires states to report something called the Work Participation Rate. While this rate sounds like it might capture which customers are benefiting from Colorado Works by becoming employed, it does not. In fact, it is a process measure that tracks hours spent in federally required activities, of which very few activities have evidence that would suggest that they lead to employment.

CDHS leadership decided that a better measure of success for Colorado Works was the number of customers who get a job. Most states rely on unemployment insurance data to match against customers to determine nine months later whether a job was secured. Managing these performance data on a monthly basis is problematic given the significant delay in the availability of these data. As a result, the program and county partners cannot make real-time adjustments to improve their operations, practices, and ultimately, performance. Instead, the Colorado Works managers requested that the technology vendor build the necessary data fields into the state's database (Colorado Benefits Management System). This took 12 months for this idea to become performance data that is discussed in the monthly C-Stat meetings. Since 2016, "entered employment" performance data is informing leadership as it manages the outcomes for the Colorado Works program.

Over the years, CDHS executive and program leadership initiated the creation of new, more actionable and meaningful measures. At times, there has not been broad agreement on the need for a particular measure or its definition. This is most common with department contractors and with county partners who have disagreed with the identified performance deficit or the defined measure or the goal—or all three. When this happens, the department's executive leadership team invests in communication, explanation, and education in an effort to work towards a shared understanding and develop buy-in. Leadership focuses on the mission and purpose when messaging goal and measure changes.

For example, the standard protocol is that all vulnerable adults receiving adult protective services (APS) should be contacted at least monthly by their assigned caseworker. The original goal was set at 90 percent for the state, which is the aggregate performance across all 64 counties. Once performance across all counties consistently met the 90 percent goal for approximately 18 months, there were discussions about raising the goal to 95 percent within the executive leadership team and with the counties. One expressed concern was the disadvantage that small and medium-sized counties face given their single digit APS caseloads in any given month. While statewide performance might achieve the 95 percent goal that does not mean all small and medium-sized counties will individually achieve the 95 percent goal. A county's failure to meet the 95 percent goal is illustrated in red on their monthly C-Stat County Dashboard. Subsequent to these discussions, the executive leadership team decided 95 percent would be the new goal and that took effect in September 2016, which reported July 2016 performance data.

Another example was a child protective services measure that illustrated whether county caseworkers were seeing children and youth at risk of abuse or neglect in a timely manner. A timely response on the part of county caseworkers improves child safety and reduces the potential for further abuse and neglect. After county performance achieved the original 90 percent goal for 15 consecutive months, executive leadership worked with county partners to strive for a new goal of 95 percent. Not all counties were in support of this increased goal and it prompted a robust debate about the value of investing more county effort on such small performance increases at the expense of investing county resources in areas suffering greater performance deficits. Nevertheless, this increase first took effect in the September 2017 C-Stat meeting, which reported June 2017 performance data.



The template of a CDHS C-Stat slide deck can be found [here](#).

Lever 2: Comparisons

C-Stat leverages multiple kinds of comparisons to inform, educate and motivate performance improvement. First, performance is compared to the target or goal. Second, performance by some is compared to performance by others who are objectively similar, such as like-sized county peers. Third, performance of a state facility, small county or nonprofit contractor is compared to itself over time. Fourth, Colorado performance as a state is compared to other state-supervised, county-administered states.

The ability to compare and contrast data at the contractor, county, program, unit, and supervisor and in some cases, even staff level allows for more detailed comparisons. These comparisons facilitate learning from others to understand what they are doing differently that might explain the performance differences. The comparative data is the basis for meetings, site visits and conversations with high and low performing units. In his book, *The PerformanceStat Potential*, Robert Behn writes, "The more detailed the comparative feedback a unit receives about how it is performing, the greater the ability of that unit to gauge how easy or difficult it will be to improve both absolute and relative performance."⁷

7. Behn, *The PerformanceStat Potential*, 317.



CDHS's Performance Management Division developed a formal peer learning method called the Performance and Partnerships Exchange. There is more about each of the six Exchanges in this report and available on the [CDHS website](#).

I have been overseeing human services in Douglas County since before C-Stat began. It has certainly changed how we work with our program partners at CDHS. While we haven't always agreed with every C-Stat measure or the goals, we are all learning together and performance is improving across programs like child welfare, child support and food and cash assistance. C-Stat has brought focus and has informed funding requests and policy decisions that have benefited the children and families we all serve.

—Dan Makelky, Director, Douglas County Department of Human Services and President of the Colorado Human Services Directors Association from 2015-2018

Lever 3: Information

CDHS relies on counties and contractors to deliver two-thirds of its services to Coloradans across the state. It is necessary that department staff have access to and understanding of the performance data for these services, but it is insufficient if county and contractor partners don't, as well. Putting the performance data into the hands of those doing, supervising, and leading the work can accelerate learning and performance improvement.

In 2015, CDHS released the County C-Stat Report, which extracts data from nine administrative databases into one report. This monthly report shows the performance of each C-Stat measure that 64 Colorado counties are responsible for managing. In addition, CDHS releases a one-page County C-Stat Dashboard that simply conveys progress towards targets over the past 12 months using red and green colors. For many small and medium counties, this was the first time they were able to see their own performance data organized in a way that is accessible and actionable. Each county director and their county commissioners (elected officials) have regular access to their detailed data and to CDHS staff for training and technical assistance.

Lever 4: Recognition

Recognizing and rewarding people for achieving performance improvements has been part of C-Stat since its inception. When a program achieves its target on any given measure for at least six consecutive months, they are publicly recognized with a C-Stat Award. The act of publicly giving awards taps into both intrinsic motivation (a personal sense of accomplishment) and extrinsic motivation (framed certificate, cupcakes, modest gift certificate) for staff. Awards are both for individuals as well as those who worked as a unit, or county, which makes more people winners. The awards can boost employee morale, particularly for CDHS facility staff, and non-Denver metro counties who have less exposure to the department's executive leadership team. It has also generated some good will for the use of C-Stat, which can counter frustrations and complaints about the workload and the intensive nature of this approach.

CDHS gave the first C-Stat Award in March 2013 and has given a total of 22 awards to state, county, and even a few contractor staff. Awards are typically presented in C-Stat meetings. In addition, nearly 150 CDHS state employees have been recognized with a C-Stat Award for achieving performance improvements since 2013. When executive leadership travels to counties and CDHS facilities to celebrate success in person, they are exhibiting a commitment to performance improvement and C-Stat as a strategy. Approximately 450 county staff have been recognized in their communities with a C-Stat Award.



All C-Stat awards given to counties, contractors and state employees can be found [here](#).

Lever 5: Follow-Up

As mentioned earlier, regardless of meeting frequency, a critical attribute of a successful PerformanceStat approach is follow-up. Any unanswered questions or additional data or information needed for decision making is documented in a meeting's "Action Plan." Specifics of these questions, requests, or clarifications are not left to individual's memories but are documented in that meeting's action plan and disseminated to office leadership/staff. Action Plans maintain problem-solving momentum and prevent each meeting from becoming a single static conversation. It reinforces that work is being done in between C-Stat meetings, which naturally makes C-Stat a part of core operations. The simple task of creating this list of what to do next has served as an accelerating force.

Questions raised in a C-Stat meeting are typically not trivial, random, or irrelevant to performance concerns. Over time, the CDHS executive leadership team has learned to resist chasing single data points and instead wait for more data points to illustrate a trend. This discipline didn't come easily but is one example of increased data literacy.

Individual action plan items generate work such as more meetings or further discussions, data collection and analysis, in-state peer learning exchanges, national benchmarking, literature review, or work plan/ implementation plan development. Typically, five to 10 action plan items are generated each meeting. The majority are due in the subsequent month with the minority due within two months after the meeting. Very rarely is an action item due beyond two months. This creates a sense of urgency and maintains momentum. Offices provide answers and information in response to action items that can foster accountability. By completing each action item, the C-Stat Leadership team can ask, "So what or now what?"



The Action Plan template can be found [here](#).

Leadership: Changing Organizational Culture



The challenge facing the leadership team is not to build some new, fabulous machine. Rather it is to work with the existing people, relationships, and structures—injecting some conscious purposes, creating some specific targets, inspiring with public recognition, devoting time while remaining persistent ...all the while analyzing data, asking questions, scrutinizing reports, in an effort to learn whether their leadership behaviors are introducing new feedback loops that foster adaptations that help to achieve the purposes.⁸

—Robert Behn, professor, Harvard University

The successful implementation of any performance management approach, and one that adheres to PerformanceStat principles in particular, depends on more than implementing the explicit operational mechanics described earlier. As Dr. Behn repeatedly articulates throughout his book, *The PerformanceStat Potential*, "...this tacit knowledge of cause-and-effect is what creates the true potential to improve performance...The dependence of an effective PerformanceStat on the tacit knowledge of the members of the leadership team explains why I call it a "leadership strategy"—why it can't work as a mechanistic system."⁹ And that is the case with C-Stat.

Exactly what executive leadership does and how it influences internal staff and external partners to do what is necessary to make performance improve is based on the tacit experience of leaders and is still somewhat of a mystery. This part of the report tries to go beyond the explicit behaviors and actions of C-Stat and describe some of the tacit leadership dynamics underlying the C-Stat approach. The mystery is best described in Dr. Behn's book, *The PerformanceStat Potential*, which details 16 causal leadership behaviors of the PerformanceStat leadership strategy.¹⁰ He writes, "Individually or collectively these 16 behaviors are not sufficient. Still, some may be necessary. But which ones? Or which ones in what combination? And in what circumstances? None of this is obvious."¹¹

While CDHS's executive leadership team is committed to measurement, which implies a healthy respect for data, they are not interested in data for data's sake. Data is only as effective as it is useful, and only as useful as it fosters learning and action within the organization.

Senior Executive Processes and Performance Improvement

At CDHS, the connection between the executive director and his executive leadership team and performance improvement is demonstrated in their language and daily actions. Trained as a child welfare social worker, Bicha has firsthand knowledge and brings lived experience of social work education and practice in human services. He has an inherent understanding of the social worker role broadly and child welfare practice specifically. This translates into empathy, curiosity, and healthy skepticism. Director Bicha noted, "I try to set a tone to come prepared; bring your 'A' game. It has to be okay to admit when you don't know the answer but you have to have a plan to get an answer."¹² He brought an underlying commitment; a human commitment to the people CDHS serves. He and his leadership team stayed informed through

8. Behn, *The PerformanceStat Potential*, 254.

9. *Ibid.*, 247.

10. *Ibid.*, 256.

11. *Ibid.*, 259.

12. Bicha, Personal interview, August 23, 2018.

ongoing site visits to where CDHS work actually happens in counties, contractors, and at CDHS facilities. They didn't lose sight of the actual human impact.

The executive leadership team was often heard declaring, "CDHS will be the most effective 21st century human services agency in the country." There was a shared belief that government can do good work, can do better, and can deliver better quality services, on time and on budget. Some observable behaviors of these leaders included:

- A sense of urgency combined with a deep connection to the human beings who are CDHS customers. This sounds like, "How many young children have to reach kindergarten who are not ready for school while we figure this out?" This kind of question is common during C-Stat meetings, which means rarely does an office get more than one month to address an action item.
- Rarely was "I don't know/Not sure/can't tell" accepted as an answer.
- Rarely was an anecdote accepted as an answer. There was a bias toward any type of data over a hypothesis, conjecture, or single story.
- Relentless examination, analysis, and collection of new data or information to diagnose the problem and address it with a solution.
- Preserving a frank and productive dialogue in C-Stat meetings regardless of who is seated in the room or viewing via video conference.

Office and Division Director Actions and Performance Improvement

In any organization, not all staff or leaders are created equal. Just as CDHS senior executive leadership's behaviors can leverage the potential of C-Stat, so too can CDHS Office and Division directors' actions. As indicated earlier, senior executive leadership is wholeheartedly committed to this strategy and expects managers to fully engage and even exploit it to manage key outcomes. C-Stat is not an administrative function to comply with in addition to the "real work." C-Stat is about the real work.

Senior executive leadership is confident that each CDHS manager is capable of improving performance. Each office director is expected to make C-Stat work for him/her and their office teams. Over the past seven years, individual office/division directors have come and gone and there are lessons from those who have maximized C-Stat more than others.

Managers who effectively engaged in the use of C-Stat as part of their management style typically:

- **Serve as positive role models for their teams.** C-Stat is an opportunity to solve some of the toughest problems the programs face with the benefit of all those in the room who are also invested in solving those same problems. They are proactive leaders who take responsibility for improving performance of the selected measures. They don't behave as passive victims of the meeting.
- **Prioritize their time and attention** to leading and managing their team's efforts to achieve the selected measures.
- **Understand the need for two competencies** across their office staff: ". . . the *analytical* capacity to identify performance deficits and to suggest how these performance deficits can be eliminated or mitigated, and the *operational* capacity to make it happen—both to figure out how to make it happen and to motivate the people who will make it happen."¹³

13. Behn, *The PerformanceStat Potential*, 75.

- **Carefully consider the measures selected for C-Stat** and ensure they are focused on the right outcomes. Taking the time to identify the key metrics of success and safeguarding that it is measured in a meaningful way can reduce frustrations among staff.
- **Carefully consider the goals that are set** for each C-Stat measure and pro-actively engage in dialogue with executive leadership on what the goal should be so that it motivates and encourages rather than deters or discourages. The goal should be explainable, defensible, reasonable, and not arbitrary, ill informed, or punitive.
- **Prepare with their teams in advance of their monthly C-Stat meeting**, so they possess an advanced understanding of the issues and represent their team's best thinking. This includes:
 - Closely reviewing the content of any action item slide to ensure accuracy and alignment with the question.
 - Anticipating questions from the Heads-up Prep document that the Performance Management Division's director produces after the executive leadership team prep is conducted (typically, the day before the meeting).
 - Educating oneself to be equipped to handle multiple rounds of questions even with an occasional "phone a friend" assist from their staff in the room. A limited or superficial understanding can result in an unnecessary amount of action items.
 - If an action item doesn't seem critical to learning or performance improvement, an effective office director will appropriately push back and suggest an alternate question that is more meaningful to examine.
 - If an action item seems redundant, an effective manager will remind executive leadership of what has been learned to date. The manager can also offer that a previous answer/data be updated and resubmitted for discussion.

The image features a hand in the lower-left corner interacting with a digital interface. The interface displays various data visualization elements, including a solid blue line graph with circular markers, a dashed blue line graph, and a grid of data points. The background is white with a large, sweeping orange curve that starts from the top left and arcs across the middle of the page. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on data and technology.

Influencing: Increasing County and Contractor Performance

Like every state human services agency, the Colorado Department of Human Services doesn't do the work alone. Across the department's seven offices, 10+ divisions and 25+ programs, contractors deliver about one-third of services and the 64 county human and social services departments deliver another third of services. State employees deliver the remaining one-third of services in the state-operated 24/7 care facilities. Colorado is a state-supervised, county-administered system for many programs such as child welfare, child care, food, energy and public assistance, child support, and adult and aging programs. CDHS programs rely on competitively procured contracts for the delivery of their services. Contracted services include the delivery of domestic violence services, refugee resettlement services, substance use disorder and mental health services, some child welfare and youth services.

Not all contractors or counties are created equal. They each face unique organizational challenges as they strive to meet contract expectations, federal or state requirements, and C-Stat goals. Contractors range from small nonprofits delivering domestic violence services to large community mental health centers delivering a wide range of mental health and substance use disorder prevention and treatment services. Similarly, county departments range from large, urban operations in the Denver metro area to small, rural operations in each of the 44 small counties across the state. In summary, CDHS relies on thousands of employees, supervisors, and executives to deliver effective services and achieve the key indicators of success that are embedded in C-Stat measures.

CDHS office and program staff determine how to build relationships, manage, and motivate county and contractor partners. Given the importance of making progress towards key outputs and outcomes, as identified and discussed in C-Stat, performance naturally becomes a topic of conversation. In fact, the exchanges between the executive director and each office director in C-Stat meetings have a domino effect. Office directors and their teams often share the ideas, questions, strategies, and concerns from a C-Stat meeting with those delivering the services locally.

C-Stat has created an expectation that everyone—including county and contractor partners—is engaged in dialogue that is based in the data and focused on how to get better and improve performance. This results in increased ownership of the challenges faced and data-driven dialogues, the use of what is learned from the data to prioritize action, and jointly celebrating success.

Increasing Ownership and Data Literacy

Partnering with contractors and counties to effectively deliver services to vulnerable Coloradans requires shared ownership. C-Stat has fostered joint responsibility and has promoted accountability. With any new approach, its sustainability often determines whether those affected decide to seriously engage. As C-Stat survived over the months and years and performance persisted as a state and local executive priority, counties became engaged. They became consumers of their own performance data and asked themselves and CDHS staff questions about their data and their own performance compared to others. In fact, counties now closely monitor their own performance and are sensitive to policy or technology changes that might affect their performance and how it appears in their monthly county C-Stat Dashboard and Report.

This increased attention to performance data was made possible by the creation of the monthly C-Stat Report and, subsequently, the Dashboard. Before those reporting tools became available, county performance data existed in nine separate data systems. Staff in each of the eight county-administered programs representing more than 20 C-Stat measures

had their own approach to disseminating raw, aggregated, and analyzed data. Each program was producing their own reports, dashboards, scorecards in various formats, and frequencies. County directors were expected to wade through this diverse volume of materials to assess their performance.

Since January 2014, the department's Performance Management Division has produced a one-stop report that combined all these county-facing measures' data into one document called the monthly C-Stat Report. The report facilitates county staff's ability to compare their performance against the goal and over time as well as to their like-sized peers (10 large, 10 medium and 44 small counties). The report includes the value statement that expresses why each of the measures matters, the measures' definitions in plain language, and CDHS program contact information. Since the summer of 2015, this product has not only been available to the 64 county directors but also to their bosses—elected county commissioners.



An example of a monthly county C-Stat Report can be found [here](#).

Although pleased with the monthly availability of each county's one-stop performance report, counties provided CDHS feedback that it was too lengthy. Each county received a 43-page monthly report dedicating two pages per C-Stat measure. While an improvement, it was simply too long, complex, and burdensome for county leadership and staff to consume month to month.

The Performance Management Division began producing a monthly C-Stat Dashboard, which illustrates all county-administered C-Stat measures on one page. The format is an easy-to-read, 12-month depiction of trends using green and red to indicate performance compared to the goal. It includes the numerator and denominator count each month and over 12 months as well as average performance and the total number by which the goal was missed.



An example of a monthly county C-Stat Dashboard can be found [here](#).

The development of the monthly county C-Stat Dashboard and Report created the foundation for dialogue about performance based in data that is embedded in administrative reporting systems they are already using. C-Stat promotes system learning. Any line graph illustrating the various counties, contractors, or facilities' performance logically leads to questions about what each is doing that causes better or worse results. Program staff are encouraged to explore these comparisons through conversations, site visits, and meetings with high and low performing counties, contractors, and facilities.

Moving from Learning to Action

To foster learning across the 64 counties in particular, the CDHS Performance Management Division created a Performance & Partnerships Exchange (PPE). This is a peer-to-peer learning method for counties focused on improving performance on county-administered programs as measured by C-Stat. Its purpose is to create an opportunity for counties to learn from one another and to share successful practices that may work in other counties. In addition to learning, these PPEs generate goodwill between the state and counties. They also generate increased attention to performance in medium and small counties in rural Colorado.

Six PPE meetings have been held to date. Each round starts with the county human and social services directors voting on which measure will be the focus. By giving the directors influence over the targeted C-Stat measure, counties are more likely to engage in this learning exercise.

Once selected, the performance analyst works with program staff to identify well-performing counties (typically two large, two medium, and two small) based on quantitative (i.e., C-Stat and quality assurance data) and qualitative data (i.e., staff knowledge). CDHS staff visit these counties and interview county staff to isolate promising practices, policies, or staffing dynamics that might contribute to each county's success. Each exchange effort culminates in a state-wide webinar and written materials documenting lessons learned.



Materials from the six Performance & Partnerships Exchanges can be found [here](#).

In addition to on-demand access to the PPE's educational materials on the website, performance analysts also conduct site visits to low performing counties. Each visit's objective is to increase the likelihood that the exchange's lessons are understood and can be adapted and incorporated into that county's practices. County directors and management teams often appreciate the time and attention the state staff invest in providing in-person technical assistance and listening to their local challenges. Following the webinar, CDHS also hosts half-day regional workshops that bring neighboring counties together to discuss these successful practices, any challenges that counties may be experiencing, and actions that both counties and the state can take going forward.

Arapahoe County Department of Human Services implemented our Arapa-STAT performance management program shortly after C-Stat was implemented. The C-Stat measures have served as a baseline for improving our performance in those and other county level measures, enhancing our data-driven decision making, and transforming our department into a performance management culture. This has enabled us to serve our residents in a timely and accurate manner while also improving outcomes.

—Cheryl Ternes, Director, Arapahoe County Human Services

Celebrating Success

From my perspective the County C-Stat Awards were a game changer...Recognizing them got their attention.¹⁴

—Reggie Bicha, CDHS Executive Director

The power of recognizing and rewarding performance is one of five implementation levers described earlier in this report. The CDHS executive leadership team used three different ways to recognize progress and success:

Recognition for meeting individual performance goals.

As county-administered programs achieve performance goals for at least six consecutive months, counties and CDHS program staff are both recognized in ceremonies with cupcakes and C-Stat certificates. These celebrations routinely take place in the county offices and sometimes get positive local press and praise by local elected leadership. When executive leadership travels to counties to celebrate success in person, it further reinforces the department's commitment to performance improvement and C-Stat as a strategy.



Recognition for meeting a set of performance goals.

In addition to C-Stat awards for individual measures, CDHS celebrates county performance based on an annual performance across all county-facing measures. Each spring, the department's performance analysts examine 12 months of C-Stat performance data to identify top performers across the 10 large, 10 medium and 44 small counties. The methodology is that for every month in which a county has data in a measure, the performance analysts calculate

14. Bicha, Personal interview, August 23, 2018.

the percentage of months they met the goal. For those counties whose percentage is 75 percent and better, they are recognized as a Distinguished Performer for that year. In 2017, 20 counties achieved this standard. The number of counties has grown each year as counties make more progress and achieve more goals—see Table 1. CDHS's executive leadership team visited all 20 counties in 2018 to celebrate their performance with them.

Table 1: Number of Counties Recognized as Distinguished Performers

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
11	10	13	16	20

Source: CDHS Performance Management Division

Recognition for “most improved,” by county size.


A third way of celebrating county performance is through the annual Most Improved Award. This recognizes one large, one medium, and one small county for the greatest improvement in the percentage of months the county met a measure's goal. For 2017 performance:

- Most Improved Overall and Small County: Moffat County (+25.3 percent)
- Most Improved Medium County: La Plata County (+10 percent)
- Most Improved Large County: Larimer County (+14.4 percent)

As of the end of 2018, about 450 county staff have been recognized in their communities with a C-Stat Award.


The image features a decorative graphic at the bottom. It includes several interlocking gears in shades of blue and red. A prominent red 3D arrow points upwards and to the right, superimposed on the gears. In the bottom right corner, there is a blue grid pattern with binary code (0s and 1s) overlaid on it. A thick, curved orange line sweeps across the top and right sides of the page, framing the text.

Connecting: Performance Management, Evaluation, and Evidence



PerformanceStat is about performance management using real-time performance data rather than program evaluation using rigorous evaluation. That said, a stat process can help leaders assess the effectiveness of their strategies by regularly tracking results and encouraging new approaches when needed. Continuous improvement and monitoring is at the heart of performance management. Where this differs from rigorously measuring the effects of change through program evaluation is speed: PerformanceStat helps leaders make leadership and management decisions faster than most program evaluations can inform.¹⁵

—Andy Feldman, former federal evidence official



The intersection between performance management or outcome monitoring efforts and research and evaluation or evidence-based models is rarely discussed in most state agencies. However, CDHS addresses this squarely and incorporates the results of longer-term research and evaluation into its more operational, month-to-month C-Stat meetings to provide context and strategic direction. Doing this requires leadership commitment, organizational links between operational and research offices, and a commitment to incorporate research and evaluation into the C-Stat process so it is taken seriously by program managers.

Starting with Leadership Commitment

As described earlier, the role of the CDHS executive leadership team is critical to C-Stat's success and sustainability. Leadership is committed to continuous improvement and expects staff and partners to actively manage their performance. This includes incorporating research and evaluation into performance management efforts. While the executive leadership team brings an appreciation for evaluation and research, it also brings a sense of urgency to this work, which can clash with evaluation timelines. This impatience reflects leadership's deep commitment to CDHS customers, who often come to these programs at the worst times of their lives. The preference for immediate action forces program leadership to balance being thoughtful and strategic in the short term while investing in evaluation efforts to uncover lessons in the medium to long term.

Creating Organizational Linkages

The staff who are responsible for producing C-Stat materials, conducting data integrity and advancing the performance improvement efforts are in the same division and office as the Research and Evaluation unit (the Performance Management Division is in the Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes). The Research and Evaluation (R&E) unit is a central resource to support research and evaluation efforts across CDHS.

The deliberate organizational placement of the R&E unit within the Performance Management Division enables the intersection of research and evaluation with the performance management leadership strategy. In the early years, the C-Stat reviews and meetings did not routinely incorporate ongoing CDHS or any industry research and evaluation efforts and their results, or evidence. As C-Stat has matured, and measures have been sustainably achieved, the execu-

15. Andy Feldman, "Evidence-Based Policymaking Collaborative Toolkit: PerformanceStat." *Evidence-Based Policymaking Collaborative*. September 11, 2016. <https://www.evidencecollaborative.org/toolkits/performancestat>

tive leadership team has increasingly incorporated results from research or evidence-based models into their C-Stat reviews. This has included:

- Conducting literature reviews to find out what works in the field and apply those findings
- Benchmarking CDHS performance and practices against other states
- Examining the results of rigorous evaluations or evidence-based models of CDHS programs or again in other states
- Using a rapid-cycle evaluation or randomized experiment to provide leadership with timely and actionable evidence of whether operational changes or strategies improve program outcomes

Incorporating Research and Evaluation into C-Stat

Since new research and evaluation results are always becoming available in human services, it is imperative that leadership and staff create staff capacity and structures that ensure ongoing learning that can be integrated into C-Stat. Below are three examples:

Example 1: Building new data collection capacity to inform performance discussions and improvement. In 2014, the Adult Protective Services Division implemented a new, custom-built case management system, Colorado Adult Protection Services (CAPS) that greatly enhanced the quality of data collected to serve Colorado's at-risk adult population. CAPS was built on a commercially-available technology platform with a modest budget of less than \$500,000. It was designed to give state and county staff the ability to generate reports and analyze data on demand. These functionalities were not available in the previous system—the eligibility determination system for public assistance programs known as the Colorado Benefits Management System.

Suddenly, state program leaders were equipped with performance data by county, which facilitates more meaningful performance and practice conversations. In addition, the program designed and validated a client safety and risk assessment tool, which accurately captures the conditions of the elderly individual. This tool facilitates better case management and allows for a pre- and post-assessment of the elderly individual.

Example 2: Developing in-house advanced analytics. Legally-free children and youth—i.e., those whose parents have had their parental rights terminated—are more likely to age out of the child welfare/foster care system before getting adopted or placed with a legal guardian, otherwise known as “achieving permanency.” Studies have found that achieving permanency leads to positive outcomes as these youth become adults, including increased educational attainment, reduced risk of homelessness, improved psychological well-being, and improved physical health outcomes.

The CDHS's Division of Child Welfare (DCW) used time-to-event analysis to comprehensively examine the factors that affect permanency for legally free children and youth. The result of this study was a predictive model that identifies legally free children and youth who are most at risk of aging out of the system without establishing permanency. Each quarter, the CDHS and division leadership review the list of the children and youth at the highest risk of not achieving permanency. Their circumstances are individually reviewed in detail and leadership works to identify and address barriers. As a consequence:

- In 2015, 56 children and youth were identified as at high risk of not achieving permanency
- Of the 56, 10 received direct case support from DCW
- Three of the original 10 have achieved permanence

Example 3: Using a randomized experiment to gain real-time results. To increase the number of non-custodial parents who pay their monthly child support, the Colorado Division of Child Support Services decided to partner with counties to conduct call-a-thons. Call-a-thons consisted of state and county staff dedicating time to call all child support nonpayers. Staff decided to measure the short-term effects of the call-a-thons by randomizing the 10 large counties into treatment and control groups. The results of this difference-in-difference analysis corroborate other information that the effect size of the call-a-thon in the short-term was relatively small. This analysis' results indicate that the call-a-thon may not be the most effective way of impacting the percentage of child support cases with no payment performance in the short-term.



Details on the analysis and the call-a-thon strategy can be found [here](#).

Example 4: Assessing the effectiveness of an evidence-based model. One might argue that applying a performance management approach to an evidence-based program model is unnecessary since "evidence-based" implies that if services are implemented with integrity to the defined model, the impacts are expected. CDHS' experience with its evidence-based home visiting programs suggests otherwise.

The federal Administration for Children and Families and the federal Health Resources and Services Administration jointly fund evidence-based home visiting models that are proven to improve child health and to be cost effective. The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program builds upon decades of scientific research showing that home visits by a nurse, social worker, early childhood educator, or other trained professional during pregnancy and early childhood, improve the lives of children and families.

The CDHS' Office of Early Childhood partners with nonprofit organizations to deliver home visiting services to families across Colorado. This program provides voluntary, evidence-based, home visiting services to at-risk pregnant women and parents with young children. These services provide necessary resources and skills to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and ready to learn.

When the CDHS executive leadership team decided to learn about the performance of its home visiting programs via its C-Stat meetings, it started by asking the contracted program evaluator for the expected impacts and outcomes. The evaluator reported that outcomes were not readily available for monthly C-Stat discussions. Again, if implemented with integrity to the defined model, impacts are expected. So, the leadership team decided to turn its attention to the fidelity of the implementation of the evidence-based models. Leadership asked if the required number of visits between the home visitor and the family was happening as intended and designed. They learned that not all home visiting providers were performing the same or implementing the model as intended. As a consequence, these required monthly visits were not always happening and this naturally became something to learn more about and mitigate via subsequent C-Stat meetings.

Results: Program Achievements and Organizational Benefits



As described earlier, Colorado Department of Human Services' five programmatic offices are responsible for human services operations across Colorado. Each office develops and manages its own set of measures, usually for each program. At any given moment, there are approximately 100 C-Stat measures in play. This part of the report describes what the C-Stat approach has and has not achieved to date.

Program Achievements

Of all C-Stat measures over the past seven-plus years, 53 percent represent outcomes and 47 percent represent outputs. Of the 203 C-Stat measures to date, 130 have demonstrated progress, resulting in a 64 percent improvement rate. Performance has been sustained for at least six consecutive months for more than 20 measures resulting in a C-Stat award to those involved. Approximately one year after meetings began (March 2013), the first C-Stat award was presented to the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Pueblo for reducing the waitlist for competency evaluations and reducing the discharge barriers to thriving in their community that residents face.

CDHS relies on counties to deliver many of its services to Coloradans across the state. Achieving performance improvements with the state's 64 county partners became possible after considerable effort was made to organize, analyze, and regularly distribute county performance data to them. Since 2014, executive leadership has awarded counties in a variety of ways for their performance according to C-Stat goals. One way is the annual Distinguished Performer Award. Table 2 illustrates the increasing number of counties that are exceeding performance goals across the 64 counties since 2013. There were 20 Distinguished Performers in 2017, the highest number ever.

Table 2. County Performance by Year

	2014	2015	2016	2017
State of Colorado	n/a	43.2 %	60.1%	64.1%
10 Large Counties	33.9 %	46.6%	64.2%	66.5%
10 Medium Counties	60.9%	66.1%	67.5%	66.5%
44 Small Counties	32.2%	35.0%	41.2%	46.5%

Source: CDHS Performance Management Division

Another concrete advance that resulted from C-Stat efforts is the increased standardization of policies and practices across similar CDHS services. The impact is most noticeable in the different 24/7 facilities that the department operates.

CDHS is responsible for the care and well-being of customers in four different facility types across multiple locations throughout the state. These include:

- Four regional centers for developmentally and intellectually disabled adults
- Two mental health institutes for chronically mentally ill adults
- Ten state-secure facilities for at-risk youth
- Five veterans community living centers for elderly veterans and their spouses

C-Stat helped shine a light on the variability of practices and policies across the same and different facility types.

Given the variety of customers, funding sources (e.g., state tax dollar, federal Medicaid or Medicare), and governing or regulatory bodies (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, The Joint Commission), some of the differences were to be expected. Yet, each time differences were identified, they were examined. C-Stat discussions encouraged office and facility directors to pause and reflect on the reason something exists the way it does. This line of inquiry challenges the status quo or the legacy practices and policies that may or may no longer be best for the customer.

What resulted was the documentation and inventory of definitions, procedures, and measures across similar facilities. Conducting an inventory identified opportunities for alignment or standardization, when possible. Throughout the years, the CDHS' performance management team led the completion of this exercise for escapes, elopements, walkaways, medication variance, and various types of restraint or physical intervention across the facilities.

Detailed below are a few specific examples of outcomes that were substantially improved:

- **Reducing the Use of Seclusion for Mental Health Patients.** The rate of seclusion for patients at the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Fort Logan declined from a rate of 8.63 per 1,000 patient hours in February 2011 to a rate of 0.00 in July 2018. The established C-Stat goal for this measure has been adjusted downward two times as a result of improved performance. Strategies to reduce seclusion were based on a trauma informed care philosophy, which requires a cultural shift for staff who are encouraged to consider the histories of trauma each patient presents. This new thinking was accompanied by a variety of changes including increased staff-to-patient ratios, a "what works" sheet to provide at-a-glance, patient-specific information identifying a patient's triggers and preferred coping strategies, and the creation of de-escalation rooms that provide patients a quiet relaxing space to regulate their emotions.

Why does this matter? The use of seclusion creates significant risks for all individuals involved. The risks include serious injury or death, re-traumatization of people who have a history of trauma and loss of dignity, along with other psychological harm. Secluding a patient is the last option used to prevent harm and is therefore now viewed by the mental health institutes as a treatment failure when used.

- **Increasing the Number of Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies.** In the Division of Early Care and Learning, the number of children younger than five who are receiving the childcare subsidy while in top-quality childcare facilities has nearly doubled, from 20.7 percent in December 2014 to 60.6 percent in October 2018. In partnership with the Early Childhood Councils throughout the state, the division was able to exceed the 39 percent goal in December 2015 and has continued to meet this goal for nearly three years. Improvement strategies included Colorado Department of Human Services staff engaging in active and ongoing monitoring and providing technical assistance to the Councils to increase the number of high-quality providers across the state particularly in what became known as "child care deserts." In 2011, there was not even a CDHS Office of Early Childhood, yet alone Colorado Shines—which is the quality rating and improvement system for all of Colorado's licensed early care and learning programs serving children ages 0-5.

Why does this matter? Research indicates that children who receive childcare in top-quality childcare facilities (Colorado Shines levels 3-5) are more likely to be ready for kindergarten.

- **Increasing the Number of Youth in Correctional Facilities Who Attain a GED or High School Diploma.** CDHS serves youth who will return to their communities at the end of their commitment in youth corrections facilities and not enough of them were getting a

GED (General Education Development) or a high school degree. Performance improvement efforts included conducting exception analyses to determine which youth did not attain their GED or diploma by time of discharge and root causes and lessons explaining that; aligning instruction to current GED standards in order to mitigate against harder GED tests; ensuring test access for all applicable youth; and reviewing facility educational programs to make any improvements. Performance improved from 82 percent GED/graduation rate in 2013 to hitting 100 percent for several months in 2017 and 2018, while regularly attaining more than 90 percent for most months in the last two years.

Why does this matter? Research shows that those individuals with educational success reduces the likelihood of recidivism and improves overall outcomes.

- **Increasing Monthly Contacts with At-Risk Adults.** In the Division of Adult and Aging Services, the percentage of timely monthly contacts with at-risk adults has improved from 54 percent in August 2014 to 95 percent in April 2017. When the use of this measure began, the goal was 90 percent. Due to consistently improved performance, the goal was raised in July 2016 to 95 percent. The revised 95 percent goal was met eight months throughout 2017 and 2018. Performance improvement strategies included conducting an exception analysis that uncovered that some contacts were made but not documented appropriately; administrative rules were passed that aligned the practice expectation of contact every 30 days with how the information technology system collected and reported timely contact.

Why does this matter? Timely monthly contacts increase the safety of vulnerable adults.

Organizational Benefits

The creation of C-Stat as a performance management approach in the Colorado Department of Human Services not only helped lead to improved program results, by fostering better data, more actionable measures, and clearer program goals. This contributed to better accountability and an organizational culture committed to continuous learning and improvement.

Better Data. If you use data, it will get attention, which can result in better data quality, reliability, and accuracy.

The first six to nine months of any new measure are typically spent debating the data quality. This consists of the details of how the data was entered, by whom, and when. Even after many years, the department's executive leadership team spends several meetings discussing each new measure by focusing on the data that makes up the measure before any strategies or improvement plans are identified. It is an important part of the learning curve for the organization to reach a shared understanding of the measure and what might contribute to improving performance. These initial conversations can also identify any perverse incentives or weaknesses in the measure so that collectively leadership has confidence in what the data represents.

A further investment in ensuring data integrity is made by conducting data integrity reviews. C-Stat performance analysts conduct regular reviews of the data in order to ensure the integrity of what is being discussed in meetings, and consequently, driving work and informing decisions. These examinations document the life of a piece of data from the activity/behavior being measured in the field to its appearance before departmental top leaders on a C-Stat slide during one of their regular meetings. Analysts examine the processes used to collect, validate, organize, report, and illustrate data. This ensures that CDHS is discussing what it thinks it is discussing and the data is as reliable, accurate, and timely as possible to inform the best decisions and next steps. The performance management team has conducted five rounds of data integrity reviews.

FIVE KEY LESSONS FROM THE DATA INTEGRITY REVIEWS



Service delivery varies. Whether it is state employees across facilities, contractor or county staff, variation in practices and operations has been identified in every data integrity round. A typical solution was more staff training and education about practice or compliance expectations. As important, CDHS leadership determined the amount of variation that could exist or be tolerated.



Good data entry is hard. Again, regardless of who is doing the work and capturing it through data entry, variation has been identified in every data integrity round. A typical solution was more staff training and an assessment of the technology to identify any potential fixes to minimize human error. Again, leadership had to determine the amount of data entry error or variation that was acceptable or tolerable.



Complete and accurate activity reporting is hard. C-Stat is only as effective as the reliability of the data that is the focus of each meeting. If data is inaccurate or incomplete, any decisions or actions items might not be suitable. It is important to understand the magnitude of the problem, such as the number of missed client contacts or number of under-counted physical interventions in a facility, in order to customize an appropriate solution.



Data systems aren't perfect. At times the existing administrative data system doesn't provide the flexibility or a place to collect important information. These reviews can illuminate weaknesses and vulnerabilities in existing data systems. For example, childcare licensing specialists use a data system that did not allow them to indicate if a childcare provider fell into a higher-risk category that required at least monthly visits. Without this raw data, a report could not be produced and neither licensing specialists nor their supervisors knew about the need for more frequent provider visits. Since the completion of the data integrity exercise, the program improved the data system to track these providers and manage specialists' time to complete the monthly visits.



Sometimes a measure is misleading. When the data in the numerator or the denominator is not what one thinks it is, this is as problematic as inaccurate or incomplete data. A thorough review of the data can result in unexpected discoveries. One such example was when the executive leadership team thought it was reviewing whether child welfare caseworkers were seeing alleged child abuse/neglect victims in a timely manner, but it was really looking at a measure of the first attempt to contact the alleged victim. The "first attempt" performance was strong. Yet the measure could have been hiding the fact that an alleged victim might not have actually been seen for months even though the first attempt to contact was made.

Better Measures and Goals. Once there is shared confidence in the data, the focus can more easily turn to whether the measure and the goal are meaningful. Occasionally goals have been increased after sustained achievement at a lower level because all recognized that the system could do better and the customer deserved better.

Increased Accountability. Candid discussions of whether progress was made towards a goal each month or not and why not naturally creates a sense of ownership, urgency, and a sense of pride or prestige. Executive leadership expects each CDHS employee to hold him or herself personally accountable for taking the needed action to make improvements. This spirit of accountability extends beyond the CDHS organizational hierarchy and affects relationships with contractors, counties, and stakeholders. CDHS expects its partners who serve Coloradans to possess a similar sense of accountability.

Organizational Culture Committed to Continuous Learning and Improvement. Individual members of the department's executive leadership team demand learning and continuous improvement from their subordinates. For example, they bring a working assumption that certainly all CDHS office directors whom they hire, as well as managers and even all CDHS staff want to improve performance. There is an assumption that everyone wants to do a better job of serving customers. C-Stat is the manifestation of that assumption.

In addition, failure is seen as a part of learning and continuously improving. As a result, office directors find themselves admitting that a strategy did not have the intended effect or delays in procurement or hiring have stalled the desired outcome. This is acceptable in the C-Stat dialogue as long as the explanation is plausible and based in facts.

A commitment to learning and continuous improvement shows staff that change is possible. It can boost morale of some employees and make a workforce that is often more mission driven than most workforces, even more motivated.

Defining success by setting goals and routinely measuring progress towards achieving those goals as CDHS has done in their C-Stat leadership strategy is one approach among health and human services agencies. It enables executive leadership to focus on what matters most to the health and well-being of all children and families. CDHS's approach is a leading example of how the field is advancing performance management by systematically organizing data to inform decisions and create continuous learning cycles.

—Tracy Wareing Evans, President and CEO of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), a bipartisan, nonprofit membership organization representing state and local health and human service agencies, seeking to influence modern policies and practices that build well-being and thriving communities

What Can't Be or Hasn't Been Achieved

As Dr. Behn makes painfully clear in *The Performance Stat Potential*, effectively implementing a PerformanceStat leadership strategy is hard. For example, at CDHS, there are measures that have not improved after many months and even years of examination in meetings, action items, data integrity reviews, and more. Possible explanations include:

- There is considerable dependence on other systems outside of CDHS' control or influence. For example, child welfare congregate care is dependent on judicial districts' decisions and housing for the mentally ill is partially dependent on the local housing market.
- Sometimes the measure itself is not sufficiently sensitive to the strategies or activities that are implemented to improve it—for example, influencing a sizable denominator such as the dollar amount of child support collections while only targeting a particular yet small population such as public assistance customers who pay child support.
- Other times it is just the wrong measure capturing the wrong information—for example, efforts to reduce the prevalence of catheter-induced infections among our veterans' nursing home residents.
- Lack of ownership for leading the hard thinking and doing that is needed at any or all of the management levels within an office, which could be at the program, division, or office level.

CHECKLIST FOR DESIGNING AND SUSTAINING A PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Following are the key elements of organizing and sustaining a performance-oriented management framework, based on the insights and lessons of Colorado's C-Stat as well as other states and localities that have implemented Performance Stat techniques over the past two decades. These elements can serve as a checklist for other practitioners interested in creating a new or reassessing their current performance management approach:



Design the Performance Management Framework and Routines

- Define the core leadership team and its role in identifying and solving key performance challenges.
- Organize regular performance meetings and how they will be conducted.
- Support the meetings with analysts that are separate from the program offices and have technical and analytic skills needed to provide a third-party perspective, and ensure the meeting routines occur, such as producing slides and follow-up memos.



Create New Organizational Culture

- Develop a clearly stated set of purposes, at a high level for the overall organization (e.g., vision, mission, values) and at the program level (goals and targets for improvement).
- Use data to make comparisons between and within programs that inform, educate, and motivate.
- Create regular reports and summary dashboards that convey actionable information about programs, and share them within the department as well as with delivery partners, e.g., counties and contractors.
- Use recognition and rewards to publicly celebrate teams and employees that achieve targets or goals.
- Regularly follow up on open issues identified in the performance meeting with action plans that reinforce the urgency and momentum for resolving the open issues.



Leverage the Performance of Delivery Partners

- Create ownership and data literacy around the performance measures and targets among delivery partners, e.g., counties and contractors, by producing actionable reports for their use, so they can interpret, understand, and independently act upon this information.
- Foster a demand among delivery partners to learn from each other and provide technical support so they can act upon their local challenges.
- Include delivery partners in celebrating performance successes.



Connect Performance Management with Research and Evaluation

- Gain the commitment of the organization's leadership team to incorporate research and evaluation into actively managing the organization's performance.
- Create organizational linkages between the staff producing near-term performance information for leadership meeting and the staff in the research and evaluation unit.
- Incorporate research and evaluation results into the learning agenda that is a regular part of the leadership meetings.

APPENDICES

Web Links to C-Stat Templates and Materials

1. [A sample calendar of the C-Stat meeting schedule](#)
2. [Sample preparation and slide deck production schedule](#)
3. [C-Stat Action Plan Template](#)
4. [Current performance analyst's job description](#)
5. [C-Stat slide deck template](#)
6. [Materials from six Performance and Partnerships Exchanges](#)
7. [All C-Stat awards given to counties, contractors and state employees](#)
8. [Sample monthly county C-Stat Report](#)
9. [Sample monthly county C-Stat Dashboard](#)
10. [Analysis of the Child Support Services call-a-thon strategy](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ms. Melissa Wavelet was the Director of the Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes at the Colorado Department of Human Services in Denver, Colorado, which collaborates with partners to design and deliver high-quality human and health services that improve the safety, independence, and well-being of the people of Colorado.

During more than 20 years of work in the nonprofit and public sectors, she has designed, implemented, and continuously improved a wide variety of social programs to be effective for their customers. Prior to 2013, she oversaw quality assurance and performance management (which was dubbed "KidStat") at the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. Before that, she spent nearly 15 years focused on workforce development in New York City as an Assistant Commissioner overseeing the federal Workforce Investment Act for the City of New York, a researcher for MDRC, a grant maker at the Ford Foundation, and an employment services manager at a south Bronx nonprofit.

Between 2013 and 2019 she was responsible for the Colorado Department of Human Service's approach to performance management (which was dubbed "C-Stat"), covering its \$2.2 billion appropriated budget, and quality assurance, audit, and 2-Generation activities.

She received a Master's in Public Administration from the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service at New York University and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Spanish at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



MELISSA WAVELET

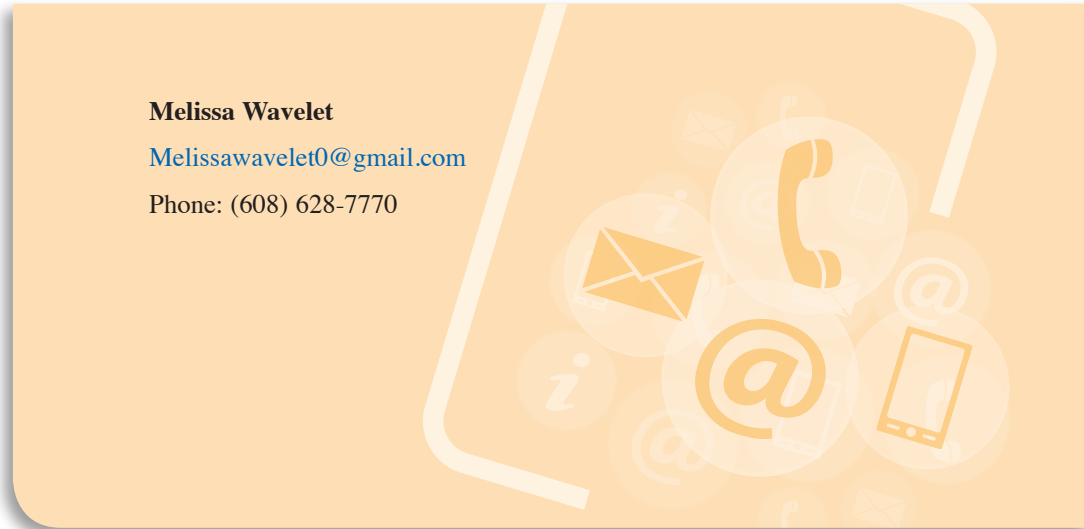
KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

To contact the author:

Melissa Wavelet

Melissawavelet0@gmail.com

Phone: (608) 628-7770



REPORTS FROM THE IBM CENTER FOR THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT

For a full listing of our publications, visit www.businessofgovernment.org

Recent reports available on the website include:

Acquisition

Buying as One: Category Management Lessons From the United Kingdom by Anne Laurent

Ten Actions to Improve Inventory Management in Government: Lessons From VA Hospitals by Gilbert N. Nyaga, Gary J. Young, and George (Russ) Moran

Beyond Business as Usual: Improving Defense Acquisition through Better Buying Power by Zachary S. Huitink and David M. Van Slyke

Collaborating Across Boundaries

Integrating and Analyzing Data Across Governments - the Key to 21st Century Security by Douglas Lute and Francis Taylor

Cross-Agency Collaboration: A Case Study of Cross-Agency Priority Goals by John M. Kamensky

Interagency Performance Targets: A Case Study of New Zealand's Results Programme by Rodney Scott and Ross Boyd

Improving Performance

Improving the Delivery of Services and Care for Veterans by Matthew Hidek, Nathaniel Birnbaum, Nicholas Armstrong, Zachary S. Huitink

Data-Driven Government: The Role of Chief Data Officers by Jane Wiseman

A Framework for Improving Federal Program Management by Janet Weiss

Seven Drivers Transforming Government by Dan Chenok, Haynes A. Cooney, John M. Kamensky, Michael J. Keegan, and Darcie Piechowski

Five Actions to Improve Military Hospital Performance by John Whitley

Innovation

Off to a Running State Capital Start: A Transition Guide for New Governors and Their Teams by Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene

Applying Design Thinking to Public Service Delivery by Jeanne Liedtka and Randall Salzman

Risk

Managing Cybersecurity Risk in Government by Rajni Goel, James Haddow and Anupam Kumar

Risk Management and Reducing Improper Payments: A Case Study of the U.S. Department of Labor by Robert Greer and Justin B. Bullock

Ten Recommendations for Managing Organizational Integrity Risks by Anthony D. Molina

Using Technology

The Impact of Blockchain for Government: Insights on Identity, Payments, and Supply Chain by Thomas Hardjono

A Roadmap for IT Modernization in Government by Gregory S. Dawson

Delivering Artificial Intelligence in Government: Challenges and Opportunities by Kevin C. Desouza

Using Artificial Intelligence to Transform Government by The IBM Center for The Business of Government and the Partnership for Public Service

Digital Service Teams: Challenges and Recommendations for Government by Ines Mergel

Ten Actions to Implement Big Data Initiatives: A Study of 65 Cities by Alfred T. Ho and Bo McCall

About the IBM Center for The Business of Government

Through research stipends and events, the IBM Center for The Business of Government stimulates research and facilitates discussion of new approaches to improving the effectiveness of government at the federal, state, local, and international levels.

About IBM Global Business Services

With consultants and professional staff in more than 160 countries globally, IBM Global Business Services is the world's largest consulting services organization. IBM Global Business Services provides clients with business process and industry expertise, a deep understanding of technology solutions that address specific industry issues, and the ability to design, build, and run those solutions in a way that delivers bottom-line value. To learn more visit ibm.com.

For more information:

Daniel J. Chenok

Executive Director

IBM Center for The Business of Government

600 14th Street NW
Second Floor
Washington, DC 20005
202-551-9342

website: www.businessofgovernment.org
e-mail: businessofgovernment@us.ibm.com

Stay connected with the IBM Center on:



or, send us your name and e-mail to receive our newsletters.



IBM Center for
The Business of Government