

Tufts Health Plan Protects Members' Identities and Privacy Through Partnership with Keane

Unique Identifier Compliance

Client Overview

In light of past and anticipated future legislation impacting areas such as record keeping, information/billing exchange practices, and the privacy and confidentiality of patient information, Tufts Health Plan (THP) is once again taking on another healthcare privacy and security initiative – the Social Security Number Replacement (SSNR) initiative. Driven by its self-imposed Q2 2005 deadline and partners' requests, THP is tackling this initiative prior to state or federal legislation mandating that it do so as THP continues to set the standard for quality healthcare, service, and value. THP is one of the country's largest health plans and is a nationally recognized leader in providing comprehensive, quality healthcare coverage.

Challenges

One of the legislatively-driven unique identifier mandates is the SSNR initiative. SSNR will be mandatory in 16 states and across the entire Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association by January 1, 2006. THP instituted its own deadline of Q2 2005 to protect member privacy, mitigate identity theft, and simplify interactions with its partners. With nearly 750,000 members and a network of 85 hospitals and over 20,000 physicians in private practice, converting all Tufts Health Plan Member ID numbers from Social Security Numbers to random numbers without interrupting member service or connectivity with its partners is no easy feat. This latest initiative requires THP to evaluate new ways to manage its business processes and accompanying IT systems to meet its deadline.

Changing its THP Member IDs requires modifications to its mission-critical,

main operational processing system, TAHPMaster. TAHPMaster is a home-grown, 25-year old, COBOL legacy application running on an HP 3000 system with approximately 2.5 million names in the member database and over 15 internal and external systems connected to it. Altering a system of this age and size requires significant application expertise and understanding of the system intricacies and complexities.

Solution

Leveraging Keane's thought leadership in healthcare and an existing Application Outsourcing partnership, THP turned to Keane and its Unique Identifier Compliance Solution to help it reach compliance by its deadline without disrupting communications with its partners. Keane's customized Unique Identifier Compliance Solution for THP consists of three phases: Planning and Assessment, Remediation, and Deployment. Each phase of this solution is supported by an essential component, Keane's Program Management Office (PMO), which functions as a central management structure ensuring THP's program receives executive-level support and aligns with its departmental objectives.

At the onset of the initiative, Keane and THP jointly assessed TAHPMaster and developed an actionable compliance game plan that details what system changes will occur and the accompanying processes that will be used to ensure business continuity.

To conduct the remediation work, Keane and THP are leveraging a distributed team structure, which is comprised of

"Our partnership with Keane was a critical success factor in this project. Keane's ability to flexibly staff its team locally, in its Halifax ADC, and in the Vermont Solution Center, as well as Keane's deep application and business knowledge allowed us to work together as a team to develop and implement creative solutions to meet complex business and system requirements."

Karen Peschel, Program Manager Member ID Replacement Project, THP

Keane and THP consultants located both onsite at THP and offsite at a near-by Keane facility. During this phase of the Unique Identifier Compliance Solution, the team creates a series of random number files to be used for new IDs, writes code, and finds and replaces all of the old THP Member IDs with the newly created random numbers. The team is also leveraging a crosswalk process to automatically map the old numbers with the new numbers enabling the database to recognize and retain all ID numbers, which ultimately simplifies communications with its constituents post deployment. This crosswalk or mapping process also improves the integrity of system data and ensures the historical linkage of membership information. Additionally, throughout the Remediation Phase and up to the deployment date, the team will continue to perform quality assurance (QA) tests to all impacted applications to improve TAHPMaster system functionality and ensure a flawless rollout.

Client Story: Large US Health Plan

In the final Deployment Phase, Keane and THP will roll out the new THP Member IDs all at once, over the course of one weekend in Q2 2005. At that time, the team will manage the integration of the remediation into the business with the goal of ensuring a smooth transition without causing the slightest hiccup to THP's business. Keane will also work with THP's clients to communicate change, create software and process documentation to enable future modifications, and conduct training on system changes to help prepare all impacted parties to ensure a successful and seamless deployment.

Results

In partnership, Keane and THP are on track to deliver the best solution to protect THP's members' identities and privacy by the Q2 2005 deadline without impacting THP's day-to-day business operations. Leveraging Keane's deep understanding of the unique identifier requirements and its expertise in

healthcare, project management, and application and business process services, THP achieves its goal plus business and IT improvements such as:

- Simplified communications with partners resulting from TAHPMaster's ability to recognize multiple IDs
- Enhanced and repeatable processes that can be leveraged for future system modifications
- Increased organizational flexibility by supplementing existing resources to meet the spike in activity
- Enhanced accuracy and data quality that ensures historical linkage of membership information
- Improved TAHPMaster system functionality from QA testing throughout the lifespan of the initiative

Why Partner with Keane?

- Proven ability to successfully complete complex, enterprise-wide unique identifier compliance projects
- 30+ years experience and proven best practices in the healthcare industry
- Dedicated staff of healthcare professionals
- Unparalleled expertise in project management
- Minimize business disruption while achieving compliance mandates
- Customizable Application and Business Process Services
- Cost-effective solutions

Keane is a global services firm that specializes in enabling transformation of its clients' business and IT functions.