



IT Quarterly Meeting Reminder: The next IT quarterly is scheduled for **Sept 8th**. We will be having a presentation on document retention by the Historical Commission, as well as a panel of young adults on what “Technology Means to them in Today’s Work Environment”. Mark your calendars! Registration materials will be out in the next week or so.

Next CCAP IT Executive ConCall: The next conference call is scheduled for **July 30th** from 9-10. The conference call will be on conducting county IT Assessments. I will be sharing a draft of the process that CCAP and Crawford County are working on that can be used to do a comprehensive IT assessment within your county.

Reminders: Please be sure to forward your technology job descriptions and policies to Melissa Hinton, so they can be added to the online searchable repository in the members’ only technology section of the CCAP Web site. You can see what’s been added by going to <http://www.pacounties.org/Pages/ITCenter.aspx> and clicking on any of the options under *CCAP Repository*.

SQL Server Training: We had an excellent training from CDW-G on Jun 20, 21 on administration and fine tuning of SQL Server 2005 and changes in SQL Server 2008. The 24 attendees learned about best practices in the areas such as security, backup, and alerts automation. The overall evaluations from attendees were very positive and attendees are looking forward to the next training in September. Mark your calendars for **Sept 28, 29**. Topics under consideration include Windows 7 and Virtualization. Keep in mind that these two day trainings are free to Microsoft Enterprise agreement members and CCAP Core Technology Program members.

Windows 7: Want to know what the benefits and new features are of Windows 7, scheduled to be released in early fall.

The following link provides a nice summary:

http://www.cio.com/article/496464/Windows_Bible_Your_Complete_Guide_to_the_Next_Version_of_Windows?source=CIONLE_nlt_insider_2009-07-07 .

This link provides what are termed the top 20 features.

http://www.infoworld.com/d/windows/top-20-features-windows-7-347?source=IFWNLE_nlt_entwindows_2009-07-15

Federal IT Spending: USAspending.gov, a re-launch of www.fedspending.org, provides information about grant awardees and their award, including the type of award, the amount, the funding agency and location of the awardees. Specifically, you can visit <http://it.usaspending.gov/> and see this information for the area of information technology.

Recovery.Gov Update: The new Recovery Web site now has an interactive Map feature that provides an overview of economic stimulus law spending by state, federal department and recipient. At <http://www.recovery.gov> click on the map in the lower right hand corner and then select the type of map you want to see. You can hover over each state and then drill down to see additional information. To read the entire article on this new feature, you can visit: <http://fcw.com/articles/2009/07/17/recovery-web-site-debuts-new-maps.aspx>

PA State Archives Newsletter: The state archive organization has made available their summer newsletter. The articles here provide a helpful list of current activities and other events. Please note that the next Archives and Records Management Seminar, is set for Oct 14, 2009. <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/Portal/Communities/Archives/AccessArchives/access-archives-vol-6.pdf>

TechNet Article of the Month - A Solution for Reporting Data in the 837 Format

Howard Weitz, Allan Collautt Associates

Consolidated Community Reporting (CCR) POMS encounter data will be used as a performance indicator, OMHSAS has indicated in its guidelines for the County Mental Health Plan FY 2008/2009. To reach its goal of improving quality through data analysis, OMHSAS needs accurate data. CCR POMS reporting provides the State with information about services funded by the county. The State therefore has to rely on these county reports for information.

However, the task is difficult. Although some counties do well, others lack the staff or expertise necessary to produce complete and accurate encounter data. In some cases, the discrepancy between the county's expense records and DPW's records for that county could be close to 50% of the total dollars the county spent on services.

Last year, DPW informed counties that it planned to change the format for encounter data submissions to the HIPAA-compliant 837 file layout. This layout is significantly more complex than the current format. The complexity is compounded by the fact that the 837 layout was designed for the purpose of submitting claims for payment. While many counties may have experience submitting 837 claims to DPW or to MCOs to bill for case management services, they may be surprised by the challenge of using this format to submit paid encounter data.

For its part, DPW recognized the additional reporting burden it placed on the counties. After announcing the change, DPW created a funded pilot program that accepted more than 20 counties to find solutions that would work for both DPW and the counties. However, counties that were not selected for the pilot will need to make systems and process modifications without any additional funding.

After many months of teleconferences between DPW and the pilot counties, the submission layout requirements are still being defined. Some counties are waiting to take action in order to see whether requirements will be finalized and whether the CCR initiative will become a reality. When the requirements are finalized, counties will need to understand the changes and make reporting adjustments swiftly. Counties will then need to keep their understanding up-to-date and make additional adjustments to handle idiosyncratic edit requirements imposed by DPW's data systems.

Counties can take steps now that require neither significant expenditures nor significant work, thus allowing staff to dedicate their time to care delivery. One such example is the expertise provided by Allan Collautt Associates, Inc. (ACA). Involved for decades with data submissions to DPW, ACA has experience taking on challenging mandates and handling person-level encounter (PLE) data submissions with low rejection rates.

"Instead of spending hundreds of staff hours trying to understand the regulatory changes and spending more time and money revising internal systems and processes, counties can use our data service bureau model," says ACA's Howard Weitz. "The county simply operates as it has in the past but sends data to ACA. We then validate, reformat, and manage the transmission to DPW."

In this way, counties get full credit for all the dollars they spend on services, and they comply with DPW requirements without investing more resources in internal modifications now that would need to be re-done to match future regulatory changes. On behalf of the counties, ACA will provide DPW with accurate information for improved decision-making, thereby improving the quality of care for clients.