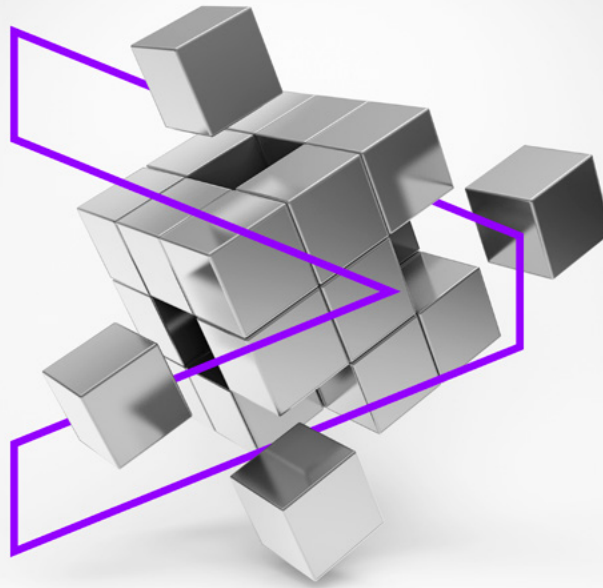


BATTLING OPIOIDS:

HOW SERVICE-BASED SOLUTIONS CAN HELP ERADICATE AMERICA'S ADDICTION EPIDEMIC



The opioid epidemic is increasingly impairing communities, government agencies and businesses across the United States. Despite recent investment in and public attention on this pervasive societal problem, the numbers continue to worsen. Government leaders are struggling to find long and short-term solutions that will finally stop this epidemic in its tracks. Accenture is committed to working with our clients to advance initiatives to move toward prevention and to stem the rising abuse of this drug across the nation.

Unlike many of the previous health epidemics our nation has faced, opioid addiction impacts every socio-economic strata, race and geography. No group is immune. The impact of addiction ranges from the obvious health costs to the less obvious community costs, such as child welfare and the strain on emergency response systems.

Accenture believes that addressing this epidemic requires a comprehensive approach, whereby decisions and policies are grounded in data and analytics. We believe in a continuous and iterative solution, where agencies plan to learn, adapt and improve their efforts to combat this complex challenge. We believe this is not a problem that can be outsourced or solved with technology alone. It requires an integrated solution that derives insight from a variety of data and analytics and leans on individuals to turn those insights into action. It requires collaboration among supporting agencies to change policy in order to impact provider and patient behavior.

And most importantly, the solution must focus on prevention—identifying the causal rather than correlated behaviors and engaging in efforts that stave off addiction.

To achieve this solution, we have categorized our approach into three underlying principles: Measurement, Management and Mitigation—the 3 Ms to confronting the opioid epidemic.

MEASUREMENT: When considering how to solve a complex issue, many business people consider the wisdom of Sun Tzu, who is often paraphrased to have said, “Know thine enemy.” Nothing could be truer when it comes to the opioid epidemic. In our view, knowing the population, the geographies, the social conditions, the health outcomes, prescribing patterns, access to prevention and treatment programs and establishing insights into costs are some of the critical data that can be used to develop insights.

Medicaid is the most common payer of opioid-related illnesses

500% increase in heroin deaths since 2011

Average 142 deaths per day in the US linked to opioid abuse

Opioid epidemic is expected to exceed \$100 billion in 2017

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html>

The key is to take an incremental approach rather than attempting to boil the ocean. Small wins can bolster support for continued focus. Today, the opioid epidemic represents the ultimate moving target, so solutions should be built to evolve – start small and increase data sources and types and analytic breadth. We recommend a collaborative approach with health management, analytics and clinical expertise to develop a comprehensive understanding of the problem. This approach allows jurisdictions to develop roadmaps with short and long-term interventions that impact all levels of government.

MANAGEMENT: Insight without action will not yield results. Management of this epidemic is all about collaborating with our clients to plan and execute policy and programmatic changes that can drive change. Our analytic services can help develop new measures and interpret results. Our programmatic services focus on prevention through outreach, awareness marketing, patient engagement, patient navigation, discharge optimization, authorization management, care management and case management. And combined with an ecosystem of partners, we can support agencies in driving change and improving outcomes.

A major component of management is governance, where we believe brokering conversations for support and information across different agencies, communities and businesses will yield the best results. These are difficult tasks, where divisions have long run deep and where data, funding and operational approaches have remained separate. Governance and implementation of data use agreements among a broad group of stakeholders can accelerate the path to improved outcomes.

MITIGATION: Until agencies turn insights and action toward prevention of opioid addiction, the number of people suffering from this epidemic will continue to rise. Understanding the progress of implemented solutions, measuring their impact and continually refining to meet program goals is key to mitigation. Leveraging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and predictive modeling, can inform agencies which individuals warrant the greatest degree of outreach and intervention before costs get high or before addiction takes hold. These models, along with analytic dashboards, allow leadership to focus on areas of success and to adapt in areas where progress is more slow.

Measurement, management and mitigation can all start small as long as there is a plan for growth. First steps should target the most costly addiction-related health episodes, identify the patient populations most impacted, establish communication and engagement protocols, establish or leverage care management capabilities, and target outreach to individuals most at risk. Measurement with management that focuses on mitigation will yield results.

ABOUT ACCENTURE

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions – underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network – Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With approximately 425,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives. Visit us at www.accenture.com.

Our Approach

An analytics-based approach is the framework we employ to manage these sets of projects. It provides a true understanding the opioid problem and its root causes locally so that the right programs and policies can be implemented to support prevention and avoidance. It relies on predictive analytics to identify the individuals who are most in need of intervention. Measuring, managing, and mitigating are continual processes that require a services-based approach for ongoing evolution to achieve success. We believe that a collaborative approach at the community and stakeholder level is essential to making a positive impact, helping to minimize the enormous financial and societal burdens and supporting agencies in establishing these communication channels.

AS-A-SERVICE MODEL: Rather than attempting to pre-define the whole solution or purchasing a set of software tools that risk being under-utilized or becoming outdated, we suggest implementing an as-a-service model that focuses on results, outcomes and insights. It allows for an incremental approach that evolves with the issue, tests ideas, and broadens or narrows focused efforts. The opioid epidemic is too rapid and widespread to rely on old models that take a year or more to define, procure and implement.

PUBLIC HEALTH MINDSET: Based on our work with other populations, we learned that solving complex societal problems requires more than analytics technology and changes in prescribing policies. It requires engaging community organizations, identifying high-risk cohorts, communicating with the most vulnerable populations and activating partner agencies to help individuals avoid addiction.

We look forward to working with our clients to address this important issue. Find out more at Accenture.com or contact us directly.

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