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Onsite CART Captioning.

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>> We're going to go ahead and get started here. We need to give our California team enough time to talk. I've been told I need to keep them in their time lines.

>> All right. Well good morning. Thank you for returning. And my name is Kristin Mackey. I'm the director of Arizona combined and it's my pleasure to introduce my region nine colleagues and friends. We have Joe Xavier, Kelly Hargraves and Mark Erlichman, and they're here to chat with us today about reducing the burden on direct service staff. I don't know how many of you have heard Joe talk but that is not something that's an unfamiliar topic for Joe to be talking to us about as directors, so anxious to hear a little bit about what Joe has to say and I'll let them each introduce themselves and then start the conversation with Joe kind of framing that up for us.

>> Good morning everyone. Starting as a consumer of the department of rehabilitation, spent 14 years in self employment selling burgers and fries and bacon and eggs, and then 11 years in a managerial role and last 11 in an executive role, five as a director. So the conversation you hear today is shaped and formed and some will say biased by those experiences

>> Good morning, speaking of bias, I am Kelly Hargraves and you might be surprised to hear that I'm an attorney because Joe definitely has a bias against attorneys, so when he tapped me on the shoulder and asked me to leave the legal role and be his chief deputy, I was surprised, but it's been a really great partnership because together I just want to really urge you all to bring your legal staff in because they can be much more empowering in terms of the things you're not required to do that are rumored to be required than to be a hindrance, that is if you pick the right ones.

So I had about 29 years of experience as an attorney. Most in state government in social service and other human interest areas and then served as chief counsel for the department of rehabilitation from 2006 to 16 and in the last few years I've been really privileged to be working more on the program side and being a partner in identifying those things that are not required or that could be done in a more -- in different way.

>> Good morning, my name is Mark Erlichman, I've got a lot of experience in this new role. I started 25 years ago as a re-up counselor, I served as district administrator for ten years and been on the executive team for another seven years. I spent a year and a half in policy and resources but the bulk of a has been providing direct service to consumers

>> Okay. I'm going to frame this up but before I do, I have to apologize in advance to Kristin. She was given the unenviable task of herding the California cats, so good luck.

I wanted to really set the stage for this conversation, but I think the best way I can do this is by talking about the ham. Right. The ham.

So young couple gets married. Wife's preparing dinner, gets the ham out. Cuts the ends off the ham. Husband looks at her, said why did you cut the ends off? That's the way you cook ham, yeah but why cut them off? That's the way you cook ham. You want to ask my mother?

Yeah, hey mom. Why do you cut the ends off the ham? That's the way you cook ham, you want to ask my mother?

Yeah. Grandma, why do you cut the ends off the ham.

I don't know why you guys do it, but I did it because my pan was too small, right?

So when you think about reducing the burden on the direct services staff, you have to think about it from two ends.

You have to think about it from what's in existence today, but you also need to think about it from what you're creating today that will create a burden on that front line.

So what's in existence today? In California alone we have thousands of pages of the rehabilitation administration mail. The state's administration manual, the contracts acquisition manual, procurement management manual and on and on and on. I'm sure that's not unique to us. You guys have that, policies, directives, memos, et cetera et cetera et cetera.

And you have an escalating demand for documentation. We need source documentation to prove that we have source documentation.

We have a snow ball demand for data. We never have enough data or clean enough data and all of this really creates a situation we're continually add to go what's in existence without removing anything that's already there.

So when you think about how do we eliminate that future burden, what is it that we do today to stop adding to that demand?

I think you need to really do a couple of important things that we're very much trying to tackle in California. One is to remove from eliminating judgment to embracing the judgment call, because what's key about that is that VR is an individualized and disability is individualized and if you're going to individualize to each person and to the disability, how can you do that if there is no judgment involved in that?

The other thing we believe we need to do is to think about what the cost is of everything that we could.

And in California, we'll routinely point out that if you take a two minute process you multiply it by five minutes, by 52 weeks by 200 staff, that's a full-time position.

One simple two minute process. And it doesn't matter what the origin of that two-minute process is, the end result is a diversion of dollars away from direct services.

And if you think about it, when you think about the reauthorization of the rehab act, Congress itself sought to place limitations on administrative costs. So if Congress in its own wisdom is saying you should only divert so much, to administrative actions, we need to be thinking about that more globally and doing the same thing.

And we think that we need to continue to balance that demand for accountability with performance. Yes, we're all using public monies so we need to have that, but it's not eliminating accountability. It's making sure that it's appropriately balanced so that you do have performance as part of that.

And when we talk about data, I mean if you think about all the data that we collect, the question is, is it the right data. Is it useful data, because we just keep collecting and collecting, you start applying that two-minute formula and pretty soon you think about how many PYs are you allocating just to data collection.

The other thing that we need to really think about is how do we articulate this to the policy maker? How do we articulate this to the policy maker at the federal level but even within our own state and our own state's processes. How do we look at all of these issues and bring that right balance to this?

And the other element that I'll add to this and turn it over to Mark and Kelly to pick up on this is, innovation. Innovation and risk is key to the work before us, right?

And the anchor of status quo, right? It's really if you think about how many of our staff like the process that we have? Right, every single one of them say they don't like it, it's too burden some of, it's too difficult, but if you go to change it, they go no, don't touch it. So there's that really conflicting perspective that we need to do, but we need to free that up to take on the innovation.

The other thing is are we solving today's problems with the same ones we've created. Are we bringing a fresh perspective to the process, to the issue, to what we're trying to do that allows us to see things that maybe we didn't see when we set these processes up in place today. And we certainly know that people are simply too busy to stop and think about it today.

So how do we create that space that allows people to free up time to think about

what it could be and what it should be rather than sort of what it is.

And one thing that I'll often share is that there's two forces that drive systems change. In my opinion there's two major forces. One is something went very wrong and now there's a reaction to it and heads will roll, positions get changed, and all of a sudden you have some forced change.

But the other one is that's really within our control, is how do we apply enough pressure to status quo, to move it from becoming that anchor into moving that forward right?

And then obviously continue to foster to take that innovation, to take that risk and that fear of failure. If I do it and it goes wrong I'm going to get penalized. And frankly, staff have good reason for that, because that is how we've done it whether it's through a future audit finding or quality assurances, how do we embrace the notion of failure, so you're going to hear more about these topics from Mark and Kelly, but one thing I wanted to pick up on here, I think this is rather fortuitous, commissioner Schultz, I don't know if RSA folks are in the room, but Mark came up here this morning and shared with us what they're going to do with prior approval.

That is an example of stepping back away from that front line burden. You heard the applause in the room. We all know how we felt about that and that's just one example of things we can do, so Mark I'll turn it over to you

>> Thank you. Just by show of hands how many of you out there or your staff believe that the majority of the work they do results in some significant assistance to our consumers, the majority of their work? All right.

How many of you feel that your staff are spending way too much time doing things that are administrative in nature that don't really result in successful outcomes for our consumers?

Thought so. So we figured it wasn't a California issue alone. We figured that, you know really taking a look at the work that our staff does with a critical eye was the right thing to do.

So we started by defining what we meant by administrative burden. The division up here is that administrative burden is work required by laws, regulation or established procedure that doesn't contribute to the output of a business.

And administrative burdens can be a distraction, a cost, a delay and source of uncertainty risk and stress.

I like to add also frustration for staff. So we thought it was important to define it for our staff that would allow our management and staff to ask the question, are we doing things that are reducing burden on staff, or are the new policies and procedures we're creating adding to that burden.

Cause the last thing you want to do when you're undertaking an effort to reduce administrative burden is add more at the end or changes procedures that just increase it further.

So in our field operations division California, one of the five priorities we set for ourselves was reducing the administrative burden on staff. So that meant that we took a look at the activities that we're doing, and those procedures that we put in place with a critical eye and then taking a look at where we could reduce that burden.

So as a result of us taking a look at it we've identified implementing new procedures, we reviewed and revised internal policies and established several new projects and initiatives, and some of these I'm going to cover with you.

Some have been established and are in place and we're enhancing them. Others we're just starting out so I'm going to try to describe those for you.

So this year we piloted an expedited enrollment process. We -- it supports same-day application and an eligibility determination based on a counselor's professional judgment, starting with their observations, and also taking consideration if we are -- who the referral source may be.

Since we noted that over 97 -- over 97 percent of the consumers that applied for

services for us were determined eligible, it made us really question why are we perpetuating a system that required our consumers to provide volumes of information.

Why are we doing evaluations and requesting medical records for individuals when the vast majority were found eligible anyway.

So we took a look at it with a premise that the counselors are professionals. The federal regulations allow for the determination based on observation and we also realized that we were collecting a lot of information that we were doing nothing with.

So the premise of expedited enrollment is that the counselor is the expert. We plan to avoid and avoid unnecessary evaluations that gave us information we weren't doing anything with. We were avoiding the collection of information that we would never use. We were avoiding a second and third and fourth appointment for somebody that was there already and we also found that we were reducing the amount of information we were keeping in the case record that was highly confidential and typically unnecessary.

We piloted, we found that it was not only effective but our staff really really loved it. They felt empowered. Things moved faster and the amount of data they had to record was reduced dramatically.

So now we roll it out statewide and more and more of our counselors are determining more and more of our consumers eligible from our first interactions with them which is at the initial intake.

One thing that we've done and we're continuing to enhance is we have specialized some of the roles and responsibilities in our VR teams. We went from a counselor model -- counselor only model where the counselor did or everything from orientation to closure and create add team concept.

Within that team our counselors are able to specialize and focus on the activities that they're good at and that they enjoy doing and they have the training for and we added some specializations into the team that allowed us to reduce the number of authorizations we were doing, the number of services we were sending consumers out for.

One of them is our work incentive planners. Consumers are given information that makes it clear what the impact of work will be and they're allowed then to make an informed decision about employment along the process. Not at the time when they're looking for jobs and then discouraged because of the fear and anxiety about losing benefits.

We added business specialists which are -- our business relations staff and that allowed individuals that we wanted to determine -- rather than providing employment services through a CRP for consumers who may or may not be interested already, we were able to have them work with our internal vocational rehabilitation developers and that avoided a lot of additional authorizations, and frustration on our consumers' parts.

And one of the keys is our service coordinators. They're analysts, not counselors, but they provide support an assistance to the counselors and consumers. Think act as another point of contact, so if the counselor is not available, there is someone with information about their case. They do data entry saving counselors time for what they're good at and they're also able to provide assistance and support to the consumers when consumers are signing up for classes again, when they need to provide updated information. They can follow up on book receipts, book lists and collect grades as well as pay stubs.

Another thing we're looking at, we identified the need for us to take a look at our business process and realized that we had a lot of paperwork.

We wanted to take a look at e-signatures because that would expedite the process with you along the way we found out we have a lot of forms. We have so many forms that I do believe we have a form that verifies there are other forms in the case record.

So let that sink in. We have a form that verifies there are other forms.

So as we were looking at the e-signature policy we thought before we figure out if these forms can have an electronic signature, let's find out if we need the forms at all.

So we looked at 132 forms and determined that we don't need 132 forms. We don't know exactly how many forms we're going to end up with but it's not going to be 132.

Then we look a look at those forms that we are going to retain and said do they even need a signature at all?

What are the requirements for a signature on some of the forms? So those that we want to keep but don't require a signature we're going to take the signature block out because it just adds a burden and it's tiresome and consumers get frustrated as well as our staff.

And those that do require a form, they require a form and a signature, we're looking at how we're going to automatic that and put in an e-signature. So part of the process is going to create as many opportunities for avoiding people -- avoiding the paperwork part of the job and having it be electronic.

In keeping with our other priorities, we also want to take a look at our business processes in general. One of the things we found out is that even though the world is modernizing more people are using e-mail, texting, going on web sites, putting information we still had a lot of consumers, vendors and providers that are calling us by phone and we realized that one, we -- you always have to staff up, you know answering the phones and oftentimes when people call it was just to collect a bit of information, find out where an office may be, maybe schedule an appointment, maybe find out, you know, where another -- what other resources are.

So we're creating an automated phone system that starts, and one of our insistent was the first option when somebody calls in is to talk to a real person. So if somebody calls in business hours, the very first option they get when they call in is I'd like to speak to someone and they bypass the phone tree, that automated system.

However if it's after hours they're given option to leave messages or collect information like addresses, and they're given other options and information while our offices are closed. When our offices are open they're given the option of going directly to a counselor, if it's related to a bill or invoice and that saves both our staff from having to be there and do that but it also provides information to individuals who just want a tiny bit of information. They don't want to go through or have to speak in depth to one of our staff, whether it's a counselor or support staff.

The other thing we've created -- one thing we found out is with the add vent of students services we found that many of our staff were providing services, you know to the VR caseload. They were also working with student services providing preemployment transition services and we found out we had two disparate systems that were similar but different enough where we were creating a lot of additional work.

So two of our districts are now piloting student services steams that strictly student services. They're only providing student services, only going on to one module in our case management system, so not going back and forth. The information is strictly for student services.

The manager is hiring individuals who are interested in student services. They're able to better train and provide information and when we provide information we're not giving information on student services to everyone across the department. In those units they're going just directly to those two teams. It's simplifying of the case management and documentation process.

Another thing we took a look at when we're talking administrative burden, there's really no greater impact or loss of effort than when you have a consumer that has gone through the entire voc rehab process or as they go through the process, they

dropout.

An unsuccessful closure, someone who did not achieve employment is probably the worst utilization of resources because we've invested time and they've invested time in something they may not have wanted or not be ready for and the consumer, individual, applicant, may have needed something else that we weren't able to provide and they didn't find out until the very end or along the way.

So we're piloting what we call a systems navigator, it's just applicants and consumers from the very beginning of the process to identify what other supports and assistance they may need. What other resources may be available for them in the community and it's not just a referral, here you go, you need housing assistance, go to the housing authority, or here, you need assistance with food and nutrition, here's our food stamp program.

It really is going with them, helping them, whether it's on line or in person, apply for those benefits and those services and supports so when they are participating in the voc rehab plan those other issues are addressed.

If it turns out their issue really was housing and now that their housing assistance has been provided and they're comfortable with that, they choose not to continue with the voc rehab plan, because they're not ready, their immediate needs were met that's fine too.

Much better to find out from the very beginning that the immediate needs are met first and down the road they come back for voc rehab services.

So when we're piloting this we're looking at how many unsuccessful closures there are, what was the reason for the unsuccessful closure, how much are we spending on certain specific resources, like child care and transportation and then with assistance navigator, are there fewer unsuccessful closure, are we spending funds on things we would consider that there are other compatible benefits for.

And that's something we're going to roll out statewide.

Currently we're also in the process of working on several portals. When you ask staff what are the two most frustrating things when we defined administrative burden to you, and I don't know whether, in your states or programs, but the two things that always come up and people get the most animated about are case documentation and the procurement process.

It's doesn't matter what office I've been in. Really doesn't matter what staff person I talk with, we have a lot of case documentation, we're in there, more like data entry clerks than we are rehabilitation professionals. And why is the procurement process so complicated, so convoluted and so cumbersome?

So we are working right now on two portals. One is a vendor portal that will allow us to exchange information electronically so the authorization process gets sent to a vendor, the vendor provides the services and completes an on line invoice and up loads whatever information, whether it's an evaluation or report or other verification that the services were provided.

It automates the services so the consumer gets a text message or e-mail asking them was the service provided and the nice thing is as we're developing this, we're sharing information with this portal with our case management system so we are not -- we're not just creating another avenue to -- for information to be collected and then have to be data entered into our system.

It actually will communicate back and forth with the case management system and one of the things that, if you're looking at those portals again, we encourage you to look at our fee for service vendors as well as our third party cooperative programs.

We get a lot of invoices. We get a lot of information, lot of records, services are provided to our consumers through our third party cooperative programs.

And we want that information then to be shared electronically as well so we're not getting these lodge spreadsheets of information that somebody then has to do data entry, remembering that the vast majority of information starts electronically, gets put

into paper, ends up being electronic again somewhere, comes back, we have to put it back in. We want to avoid all those steps. It's electronic to begin with, it should stay that way. We don't want to duplicate work that's already done.

Once the vendor portal is up, we're going to have a consumer portal. A way for consumer to share information with their staff, with the team, as well as allow them to upload records, grades, we're going to add functionality like they're going to be able to take a look at their IPE, they're going to be able to sign forms. They're going to be able to upload information, check on the status of services and eventually, the hope is that they're going to be as self-directed as they want to be using the system and the counselors are going to be able to interact with them regularly, but in meaningful ways like counseling and guidance and planning.

When we talk about administrative burden we were fortunate to have a year-long experience with the department of finance. And one of the things we did is described the burden on our staff related to data entry, data recording, and the procurement process.

And for the first time in my recorded memory, we actually were given state general fund, a hundred percent state general fund to provide the resources to implement these portals. And I don't know about your states but just general fund typically is like little diamonds you find and they offered up. We absolutely accepted and we're excited because this is going to fund the development of these portals, not just this year but ongoing. So it was -- we made a remarkable case, and honestly, the way we sold it is we just described our process.

We didn't embellish. We said this is what our staff does on a daily basis and they saw the value and need for us to take a look at how do we improve our process so we provide the meaningful work and support.

And ultimately one of the things that I would recommend everyone to take a look, when you're looking at the administrative burden, there are RSA changes, take a look at when you are collecting a new bit of information, whether or not you can automate, you can do a script with your IT staff, that information is put into the system rather than everybody having to go in there and do data entry again, but the other thing to consider is if we're putting information that the majority of consumers, it will be in the affirmative, that have that be the default and then staff go in there and take it off if it's not the case as opposed to being in the affirmative.

So it really is simple but right now every time we have to do a data fix or data entry we ask the question which is the greater percentage, yes or no or a one or two and then we default that way and instruct our staff to go in there and take it off when not applicable and they do that so those are some of our initiatives and efforts towards hopefully the continuing to address our priority of reducing the administrative burden on staff.

>> Thank you, Mark. And on the slide is a picture of a light bulb with a light bulb over its head and this is where we like to share with you how we're identifying innovative ways to change our business while we're still a public -- a government entity and there's a lot of attention given to government entities. There is a stereotype at times that we are wasteful so sometimes eliminating proof or evidence of what we're doing can be risky, you know folks are afraid of being highlighted as the example of something we did wrong in an audit.

And it's, while our staff will complain about the amount of steps that they have to take to do something, as Joe mentioned, they're a lot more reluctant to actually raise their hand and say, I'm comfortable eliminating that step.

So I want to share with you some of the approaches that are fairly recent, which is a change from the way that we've typically done problem solving, which is turning to the executives and the managers in the group to say solve that problem.

And we're really optimistic about our new approaches to problem solving. And again, we recognize that proving or having some documentation is important. It's important to maintain the public's trust in how you spend the money. It's important to

maintain RSA's trust in how we're spending the money, but where we have to start is we have to start with a management group that is open to risk taking.

So Joe, when he became the director in 2014, really introduced that and it has really helped. We still have a lot of middle management that doesn't work with their central office day to day, that are not yet probably believers that we will not be slapping hands when someone gets dinged let's say in an audit for doing something, as long as we can tell they used good judgment. And where there's failure, we will still applaud the effort, the idea.

And it really needed to come from the director level and it really needs to be reinforced in all the meetings that we have, that we cannot afford to keep committing resources to those administrative burdens that don't have a positive impact on our staff -- excuse me on our consumers.

And we really reinforce that with our counselors. What we also do is when we have new staff come on, at least the new staff to come to our central office, because we have offices throughout the state, we turn to those folks and we say, we've been doing this job a lodge time and there are probably things that you're going to see that we do. And you're going to think that's about the stupidest thing I've ever heard of.

But you're not going to feel comfortable telling your supervisor because for all you know, your supervisor came up with that process. We're telling you, the director and chief deputy director, that it's your responsibility to say to your supervisor, I have an idea. I see that the way we're doing this takes this amount of time or this much work or could be done differently, or can you help me understand why is it that with do this.

So we say that to them and they say it to their supervisors. You are expected to identify any solutions that you can -- that you can see. We're all in this together and even if you're not in accounting but you notice there's a process for accounting that makes us fill out a lodge form and it doesn't make sense to you, we need you, because sometimes things can be right under our nose and we don't see it.

One of the things I would caution though is we are so engrossed right now in student services that we sometimes our innovations or new approaches sometimes appeal to those consumers who grew up with technology, who grew up multi tasking, who grew up with a lot more information than the older generations, but we can't leave our older generations behind.

The majority of our consumers are people who acquired a disability before they were in that age range for pre-ETs. So we have to catch ourselves not defaulting to technology always being the solution, because we might leave out those folks that don't have a computer at home or that are more comfortable getting a brochure about our resources than being told to go onto the Internet.

One of the things that we did in the last couple years is we established a position, or we really modified an existing position that was entitled operations and accountability, you know comes with a badge, comes with some real sense of I'm going to make sure that we're doing it right and we're following all the processes.

And we changed the name of that to our strategic initiatives advisor and I want to give a shout out to my colleague, Chris McVay from Minnesota, who helped shape that idea. You know the idea of a person whose role is initiatives, new things.

So while all of our executives, all of our staff are expect today identify new ways of doing things, it was -- it's hard to stay on top of your busy workday, we want you to be creative.

And to have somebody who's an add visor, not the sheriff but the person who might go to Mark and say I've been talking to a lot of the VR staff and it seems that there's some great ideas going on in this office. How about we go out there, mine that information and bring it back to you or go to Joe, but they report to Joe and to me.

So strategic initiatives. New -- still has an element of accountability, of course. We all have that responsibility. But to not have the emphasis be on accountability.

Finally before I launch into one of our sample approaches or our illustrate our approach we've taken, Joe and I kept scratching our head, saying where is the I in WIOA? We don't have guidance from above, we don't have guidance from the side.

Where is the innovation piece? So we invested in sending a few of our staff to an academy on innovation and learning the processes to identify innovative approaches.

It can sometimes be a simple sign or voice mail that says this is what DOR does, so if somebody reaches out outside of business hours and they think they are reaching a different type of service, they know.

But a different approach to making sure that we use the user centered model, so that if we're talking about changing something that will impact consumers, we get the consumer perspective. We start there. We don't start with management in our Sacramento office.

If we're doing a change that would impact our supervisors, we make sure our supervisors are part of it. So on the screen is a model that starts with the word empathize. And then it goes to the word define, it goes to the word of ideate and then the prototype and then test.

And that is the model that our uses.

So with a little more specifics about that. I'll give you an example of something we did with one of our offices. In southern California what we're finding -- well we're finding this throughout the state but people are moving from the west more to the east. So moving from San Francisco out to the east bay and beyond because prices are just too high.

We've got google, Facebook, we already had the silicone valley that was expensive, but it's even more expensive now. So our offices in some places get less traffic than they were designed for.

So in our southern California office and riverside office we found more people were moving east. And until we caught up with restructuring that office, there were a whole lot more applications coming to one of our branch offices than historically had come.

And yet the resources were primarily in a different place. So we started with the problem and said let's use our new process and see how we can do this.

Instead of it being Mark and his management team going into that office and saying you know we've got a work faster, we've got a delay in getting folks into meeting with their counselors, we had this group of folks that they didn't know, come in but before they came in to the office and met with the staff they did what is on the slide as described as discovery based on the problem. Data dive and policy research.

So they got the baseline. They looked at the data and said how much time is the average person who comes to DOR having to wait before they can get in for their IPA?

Now, for our RSA folks, do not see that as delay in service. It could be seen as that. We're still provider information but we're very concerned about any delay in service, losing people that may have just in a spark of, you know, confidence, that they can go back to work, they might lose that if they're waiting, so it was a really urgent problem.

In Sacramento, folks looked data, looked at the nature of disabilities, identified what it looked like, not certainty but what it looked like had been happening, this increase in the applications.

And if your head is down and you're caught up in your work even if you're a good supervisor or manager you might not even see what's happening around you.

And they did the policy research. What's the policy about how we serve our folks? And is that really a requirement?

With that information, our innovation folks and began this process and the first part of that's really important is empathy mapping, mean you all are now consumers,

not supervisors, you're all consumers and people who want to submit your application.

What are you feeling? What are you feeling when you come to the office? What are you feeling when you call on the phone and the person who answers the phone isn't the one who has the answer but has to find somebody else to answer?

How are you feeling if you go into an office and there's a few people sitting in chairs and it looks like you're going to be taking a while?

So that's really important. I mean ideally you have in that room people who have been consumers, people like Joe, who have been, and actually had that experience.

And you should have you know, arm focus group or at some time really bringing in the staff but the next best thing is getting folks comfortable in the room, having an ice breaker where people are comfortable, they don't feel like the folks coming from central office are there to shame them or identify what they're not doing but to truly say we are here to support you, it must be really frustrating to not be able to see your consumers right away or your applicants.

So now you are that person, what are you feeling?

And then they had individual one on one interviews or group interviews based on classifications as to how they felt. They mapped the journey of an applicant or consumer and then they brain stormed.

So I'm going to show you the next -- okay. So what is on the screen right now is the discovery phase, journey mapping and what you would see is you would see a group of people, all looking at the wall that is taped off, blue tape like you use for painting, and different levels.

So as folks brought up their ideas about what a person might feel, they put it in order of what is the most serious, like saying things like, you know, here's where they're happy. They're happiest when they get the contact back. Where the pain point is for the applicant or consumer, and where there are opportunities where we could make a difference.

Here are some of the words that were in the sticky notes that were put up on the wall and for those employees of ours who have visual impairment, they could e-mail their thoughts and put it on the wall by someone else.

But just seeing that wall full of sticky notes, I hope it shows for you the amount of enthusiasm our staff had for solving this problem, which is really different than when you send an e-mail out and say if anybody has a suggestion, please contact so and so by e-mailing them, but where they really felt the time was invested.

So some of the words that our staff described, that somebody might feel is frustration, ignored, overwhelmed, anxious, confused, angry, another frustrated, that we didn't care, that we had poor customer service and that they were ignored or they might feel that they just don't understand why the process is the way.

So this is a real -- this is -- this was good for folks to be able to step out of, I'm being given too much work to do and instead, moving away from the real customer service feeling.

The pain points that we had the staff describe that contributed to that experience that was in that office that had too many applications was that our technology was outdated. We had slow connective tee to our network in this field office, that the aware system that we used wasn't intuitive, it wasn't user friendly. Works great for those who really know it well but not for those who have to work quickly and use their intuition, when it came to our staff, they recognized that they didn't have enough support staff, that there were some people that had uneven case loads or there was uneven case loads among folks where it wasn't necessarily understood as to why one person had a different caseload.

There might be a good reason, but that was identified. They acknowledged poor morale, staff burnout and when it came to paperwork they identified some of those things that Mark shared resulted in a solution about not having good communication, there's too much paperwork, and there's a lot of redundant paperwork.

We used to actually have a separate form for a consumer to sign that gave us permission to get their medical paperwork and a separate form for the nonmedical paperwork, so things like that that were really frustrating.

The next slide shows ideation phase that I shared, which now that we identified the biggest pain points, the technology, or the attitudes or you know different aspects of their colleagues, as well as in paperwork, now they brain stormed with good ideas. So they honed in on those three areas and what you would see was another bunch of sticky notes where folks didn't feel like they had to calm out ideas and worry about it being a stupid idea, but gave a lot of examples.

And then the next stage was a solution. Folks put dots up on the board for things they agreed were priorities for identification solutions.

So that's an example of how we -- of the approach we took recently to have staff really help identify the solutions.

Okay.

>> I'm just -- one quick thing and then turn it over to Kristin. She was trying to herd the cats. But just real quickly, so you guys heard a lot about creating that space for innovation, so I want to share very quickly with you some intentional action to create that.

And it really starts with the executive leadership team to me. That's where it all starts and you know Mark, our commissioner charged us yesterday with leading. And that's something that we take very seriously.

When we hire executives, frankly any senior level position, but most certainly executives, we no longer hire for knowledge, skills and abilities. Yes, they're needed, but if you don't have the leadership competency or if you're not willing to embrace the future that might be different than the past, don't apply cause we're not going to hire and we're very, very intentional about that.

The individual that we hire owns the team and the team owns the organization. You don't get the -- Mark doesn't have the luxury of saying IT is not my problem, that's John's problem and John doesn't have the luxury of saying field service not my problem, that's mark's problem.

One other intentional thing we do, every month Kelly and I have a conversation with each of our executive members, focused on only two things: Leadership and systems change and that's not just about the discussion with the member of the team.

It forces me, it forces Kelly, to be intentional about spending time on leadership and true systems change. Not improvements, if you're coming to me and want to talk about renumbering the forms I'm changing the conversation

>> Sounds good. So just a few questions, kind of who do you think is the most influential in this process and making these changes

>> I can take that one. Since June I've been going around to the different districts in our state and within our division we have about 1350 staff is to we have about 100 managers so I've met with every single one of the managers now since June and I've asked them the same question.

And that question was who do you feel is the most influential person in the organization, that person who dictates how we do our job and the way we do our job and how frequently we do different things, who is that person?

Are there any guesses out there?

Who is the most influential person in your organization? So in my visits I heard the director and I said no, it's not the director. It would be nice if it was the director. Joe may think he's the most influential person, he's not.

Somebody goes well it's the staff. That would be great, that would be great if you were the ones who decided how you do why are job and the tools you do your job with, but it's not staff.

One said the consumer, I said that would be ideal. A consumer should dictate how we do our jobs. But it's not. It's this person called somebody.

Somebody says we did -- we have to do it this way. Somebody told us to do it this way. I have not met the somebody but if I do I'm going to kick them in the shin. Because nothing that somebody ever said is the ideal way of doing whatever it is they told us to do.

>> Very true. So that was a little bit of a setup, if you couldn't tell there, but just kind of leading into that, though, when you're talking about piloting -- I mean you guys are huge. You talk about the number of staff you have, the areas, the expanse that you have to cover, to serve your job seekers and consumers, how do you communicate changes in process and kind of look down across rural, urban, how do we make sure that what you're intending do happen is actually happening?

>> Are you going to start? Oh, she's telling me to start, oh. That's called delegation.

So there's a couple of things and you know, obviously you know California is a very large state so we have extreme rural and extreme urban. So one of the things and you heard me allude to this a little bit is really shifting from a process that says this is how to, to a process that says here are the principles we want you to apply. In doing that.

So that's one vehicle we look to to try to balance urban and rural. I mean we go to places where we have more providers than you can shake a stick at and we go to another place where you're going to drive for 200 miles before you can find somebody to do an AT assessment as an example.

So how do we gets that message out, there's the traditional CYA so we have evidence to show the communication, et cetera. But that really doesn't always resonate with the staff.

So a few things we do, one is continuous messaging. We do that by Kelly travels to the districts. I travel, Mark travels. We travel to the branch offices, and we intentionally engage.

We hold monthly meetings with our senior leaders which includes all of our region directors and communicate. We engage in a quarterly forum with all managers and supervisors and communicate.

And in case you don't know this, the number one problem that we face across the organization if you ask any of our staff is, we don't communicate. Right?

But as we keep trying and we keep doing it, but here's the other thing I think we're hearing more and more. Stop telling us how and tell us why do we need to do this. So

>> Yeah, I've gone out, met with all the management teams and one of the things that the theme for my businesses is for them to challenge the process, so not to accept the status quo, but to get a response and to challenge the -- all the misconceptions they may have about what is required or what isn't required and to continue to challenge the process until they're satisfied with the answer, not to stop, saying okay, somebody in sack men toe told us to do this way.

And the other thing we've been communicating is stop asking and what I mean by that is we want to delegate authority and control to the local level. Person who works in Butte county, doesn't want us to tell them what's ideal there. They need to be responsibility, they need to be nimble and the only way we do that is by empowering them and letting them know it's not just their responsibility -- they don't just have the ability, they have the responsibility to make those decisions and we have to be willing to accept risk.

And I tell the managers, they should take credit for nothing but mistakes, if staff gets the credit. If something bad happens, you exercise judgment and if you did it based on the best information available, it's not on you, it's on me.

Otherwise we can put a memo out there that we think is brilliant and the smartest people put these together and somebody in the district will look at it, saying this is really dumb for San Diego, but let's do it cause somebody said

>> Pronounce are the worst for me, too, like who is they, who is they.

I'm going to ask one more question and then can I get somebody to run the mic around for audience questions? Could you do that?

So I heard, I want to give you some opportunity to talk about some of the reductions in your process. You were talking about taking a look at your policy manual and all the papers and manuals you had, and thousands of pages and if you want to share a little bit with that.

>> Yeah, I think for the most part we are taking a look at what is effective, what isn't effective. We have countless forms. And we realized that we really have two concurrent case records. We have the electronic case record, and the same information isn't in both. If at any point in time we have to review a case record, we have to get both of those records together.

So we really are looking about going entirely paperless and the only way you can go totally paperless is you have to be willing to question everything and see what is necessary and essential.

And when I say we, it's not us. Like Kelly mentioned, it really is having the staff who do the day to day weigh in and provide the feedback and input and also soliciting input from our consumers.

We have so many processes in place because they've always been in place that it really has been very empowering for our staff to basically say I don't want to do that any more, we'll look at policy and then we'll let things go.

>> Time for one question.

>> Oh, got one here.

>> As you made the transition to a organization that shifted from being risk averse to embracing the risk associated with innovation, what were some of the challenges that you faced and what strategies did you employ to overcome maybe the resistance that you observed or the anxiety around meeting performance or striving for perfection?

>> I'll get it started. From the very beginning, the onset, I've done something that people thought was very odd from the beginning. I've informed our senior leadership in our division that my expectation is that they celebrate failure.

That when somebody tried something that didn't work out, that that's the person we should recognize. Because if others think the only time you're going to get a pat on the back is if you do something that succeeds, they're only going to do things they think will be successful. That's not pushing the envelopes and working outside the box, so we recognized individuals that have tried something that you know whether mixed success or no success at all, for the effort and ideas, and then we have the whole conversation about what lessons did we learn and where do we take it from here.

If your staff sees that people who are successful get recognized and promoted and people who try things get chastised they're never going to take a risk. So you have to be willing to take the risk and accept the consequences, but we have to be willing to accept that, otherwise nothing else is going to change.

So you need to celebrate failure, celebrate mistakes, but do so because it is recognizing somebody's courage. It is way more courageous to do something you don't know if it's going to be a success. It's nice to recognize effort whether or not they work out

>> I want to add one other challenge that, when you ask about the challenges that we have, is overcoming the feeling that I'm going to spend my time in this room and I'm going to give an idea to my supervisor and it's going to go nowhere.

We've all been on the receiving end of that and we have to be really careful about following through, even if we end up saying this idea for this portal has to be in the parking lot until we get more funding, we have to make sure that we really -- make sure they don't believe that it got forgotten or that they wasted their time.

Joe, you helped with our expedited enrollment innovation and maybe you could say a few things about what you did

>> I am, I'm going to wave it into the next answer so who has a question?

>> I have a question. I really appreciate the information you shared. This is really helpful. In my experience in VR over the last 20 years or so, I've noticed that a lot of times, our staff, particularly newer staff, have very innovative ideas but the immediate supervisors even the supervisors above them have been reluctant to take a risk in making things more effective and efficient.

A lot of times, as well, the executive team has struggled with embracing and taking risks and trying to improve processes and systems in place.

So I'm just curious if we start at the top how did you overcome some of the resistance perhaps that your own executive team maybe expressed and how did you get them on board so throughout your organization they're embracing innovation, taking risks and really striving to make things better and listening to the voice of the customer, which I consider those individuals who come to us for services as well as our staff.

>> I knew you were going to ask that question. So when Mark -- Kelly just talked about me going out in the field. So when we were rolling out expedited enrollment I personally spoke with every single team and made it very clear to them what we were expecting, including that if they saw a better idea I expected them to pick up the phone and call me.

What do you think that says to that manager in the room about accepting innovation? And I will tell the managers, your choice: Staff either come to you and you embrace it or you come to me and you do it.

That's what it comes down to. So I'll go back to who do we hire and I mentioned that.

But one other thing I'll tell you is how does that start at the top? I can talk about creating space for risk and all, but what did we do? I'll give an example.

A couple years ago we had an audit team come out and say the person who determines eligibilities cannot be the person that designs the plan and provides the services.

And I said no, that's not going to happen and we had a very courteous but intense conversation. And if I'm not doing that, then I'm not walking the talk, people watch me every day and if I say something I don't do, they'll look at me, smile politely and nod and go back to what they were doing cause it's safe.

>> All right. So that's the presentation from California team. I know they would be open for questions afterwards and we'll have the next group come up, thank you.