

Dallas County Health and Human Services Department



Managing health data with transparency on the cloud.

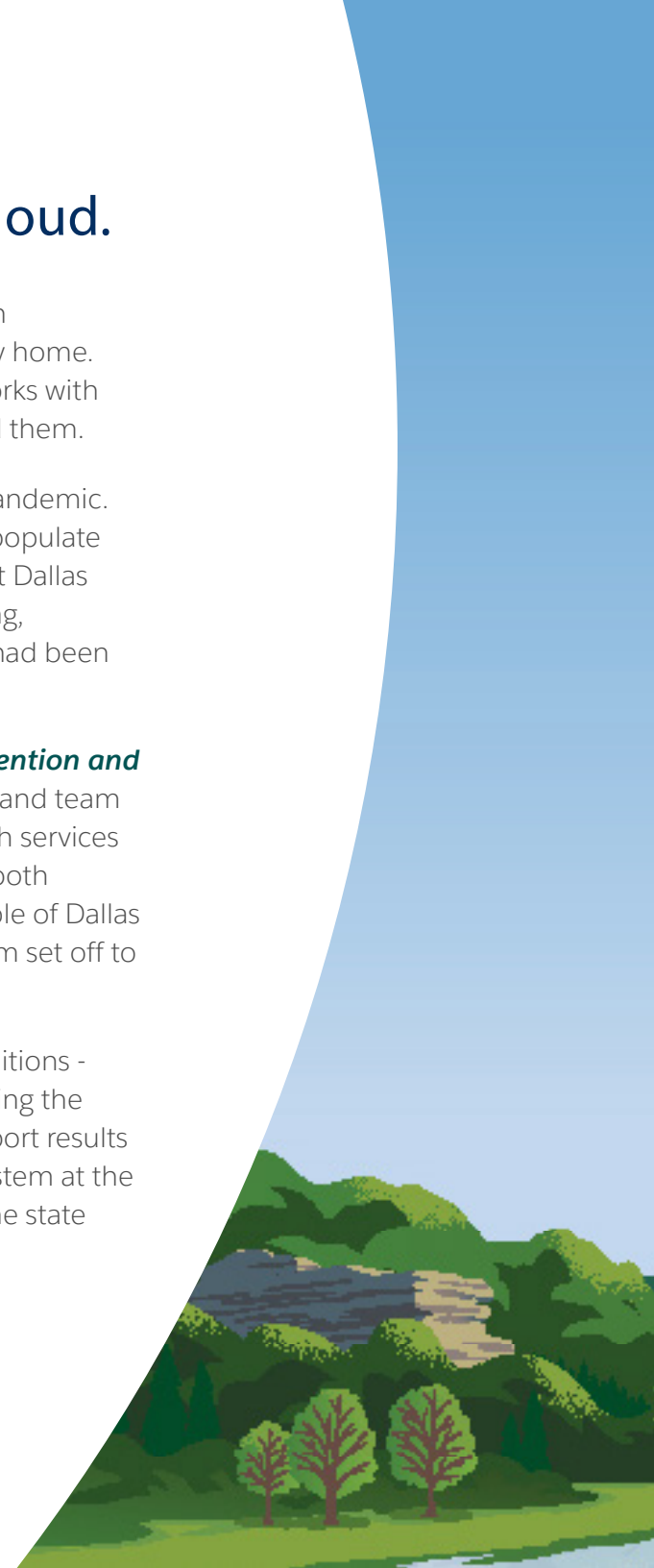
The Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is a nationally accredited public health department responsible for providing health and social services to those that call Dallas County home. With 2.6 million people and an annual budget of over \$258 million to manage, the DCHHS works with their 600 skilled staff to optimize and protect the well-being of those in the community around them.

The team in Dallas County originally began their Salesforce journey in response to the global pandemic. “Early on, our objective was to create a platform that could initially ingest COVID-19 data and populate important insight for relevant parties,” said Dr. Philip Huang, MD, Director of Health Authority at Dallas County Health and Human Services Department. “The system would be used for contact tracing, conducting case interviews, data visualization, and collecting contact data on individuals who had been exposed. However, that was only the start of our journey with the cloud.”

With a mission to **“protect the health of the citizens of Dallas County through disease prevention and intervention, and through promotions of a healthy community and environment,”** Huang and team are dedicated in their assessment, community input, disease monitoring, regulation, and health services that can help control the spread of disease while understanding the importance of resources, both human and financial, directed towards areas of improvement. With a vision to ensure the people of Dallas County receive information and services needed to maintain and improve their health, the team set off to modernize operations to better the constituent experience.

Huang and team had goals of expanding health coverage to other non-COVID reportable conditions - like monkeypox, Ebola, vaccine-preventable diseases, foodborne illnesses, and others - leveraging the platform previously built. “Everyday we find ourselves needing to collect information and to report results to the State health department and CDC,” said Huang. “In order for us to be able to use our system at the frontlines efficiently, we also knew it would need to be able to communicate seamlessly with the state systems and vice versa.”

Here’s how they did it.



A healthy community requires an informed ecosystem.

Managing data and acting quickly on findings is critical to protecting and promoting the public's health. Previously, the Dallas County Health and Human Services Department (DCHHS) was operating on disparate legacy systems that were unable to communicate with the state's larger processes, introducing barriers to collaboration efforts. The team was challenged with standing up an initial system that could accommodate hundreds of contact tracers, facilitate and coordinate their interview processes, and automate the data that was being ingested, all from one platform. "We also wanted to address pain points from the past like deduplication, matching and merging of incoming data from different sources, and correct address validation and verification," Huang added. "We also have various dependencies on the state system for communication reports with broader organizations like the CDC, that complicates our progression forward."

"COVID-19 showed how important timely and accurate public health data is. We should not be shortchanging it and using inferior products when supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities and those around us."

Dr. Phillip Huang, MD

Director of Healthy Authority at Dallas County Health and Human Services Department

Huang and team recognized a need for a modernization across operations and service to get the job done quickly and more efficiently but struggled with change management. There was hesitancy in moving to new digital tools while still protecting the human connection in engaging with public health entities. However, "the volume of data that we were presented with during COVID was enormous, and it directed us to reflect on our current processes," said Huang. "A light was shed on the historical lack of investment in technology and infrastructure for public health." A digital transformation began. A move to the cloud for the DCHHS would be a fresh start to data ingestion and management through both the unprecedented and more 'normal' times.



The future of public health supported on the cloud.

The team deployed a central processing system that would allow for lab, hospital, and vaccine data ingestion. The platform would support contact tracing efforts, matching and merging of information to create cases, and data visualization throughout the ecosystem.

“Public health data is important, and the timeliness and accuracy of that data is crucial in its impact beyond.”

“We took a look at our volume and where it was coming from– electronic lab and case reports, paper faxes, the CDC, from hospitals and other places of public health consumption– as we built out the system to act as our one-stop-shop,” Huang said. “Being able to manage the ongoing volume of data was nonnegotiable for us, alongside integration efforts with our other systems.”

COMPLIANT | For a team managing information that must be HIPAA compliant or better, security was a high-priority throughout the build. With Salesforce’s key compliance structure, the Dallas County HHS can monitor, manage, and maintain resident data while knowing it is secure and accurate.

FLEXIBLE | “As we move forward and continue to develop our platform, we need self-sufficiency in maintaining our own systems,” said Huang. “With digital tools like the cloud, we have the features and capabilities available to us when the time is right as we continue to build out our processes for the betterment of our users.” With future goals to expand into other reportable communicable diseases, and eventually non-communicable diseases, scalability across new use cases will allow Dallas County to continually improve their approach to public health and serving the user.

The future of public health supported on the cloud.

AUTOMATED | Keeping locals informed in regards to their health and health data is a top priority. With automation capabilities across case management, data management, and communication outreach, end users are never a step behind when working with the DCHHS. Transparency has allowed for an additional layer of support when monitoring and maintaining data with visualization means that carry from the local to the state level.

INTEGRATED | Working to communicate results to those affected is critical in keeping the public healthy. The team in Dallas County has integrated systems with their cloud platform to ensure constituents are being met when and where they most prefer and not missing a beat. “With digital tools that can support each piece of the work we are doing, we are investing in the future of our people as opposed to shortchanging public health with inferior products,” added Huang.

Additionally, the cloud has brought ease of collaboration to Dallas County as they interact across state, local, and federal agencies in regards to public health data. With the ability to integrate text message and email sends, Google maps, and other things alike, processes are reaching ultimate levels of efficiency.



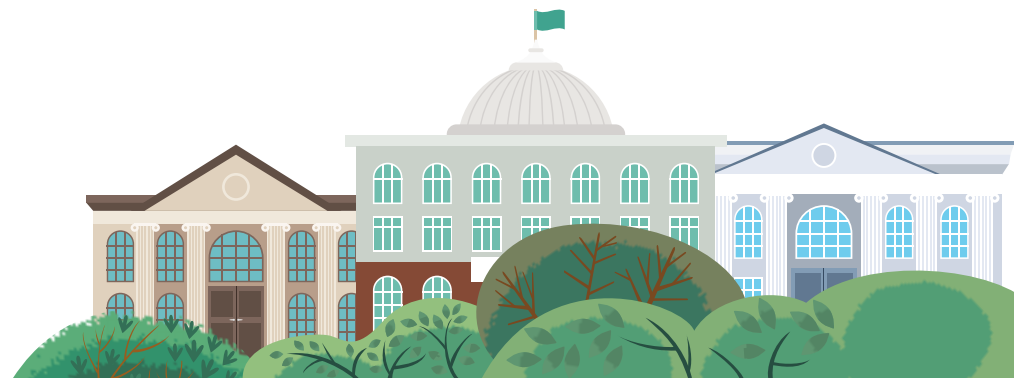
Real-time results for meaningful impact.

Whether it's during unprecedented times or not, supporting constituents is always the goal. With digital tools to empower the mission, Huang and team have seen impactful improvements in data visualizations, both internally and externally, that are real-time. Additionally, the ability to handle the larger volumes of data with ease while integrating various systems together to unify the experience has introduced new levels of efficiency to workflows and processes.

"We are able to manage things like vaccination data, electronic lab reports, incoming cases, and mortality data all from the same platform."

Dr. Philip Huang, MD

Director of Health Authority at Dallas County Health and Human Services Department





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