

Development and use of Salesforce for result look up and COVID-19 survey to complete own interview



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To support case investigation and contact tracing, Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) developed self-service functionality within their COVID-19 surveillance system to allow residents to schedule tests, review results, and complete online surveys.

The “What”

The COVID-19 pandemic led to an extremely high volume of testing, initially conducted by the state, and a large burden of work on Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) to deliver test results to the public. Similarly, the high volume of cases led to a large burden when universal case investigation and contact tracing were recommended. Self-service functionality was developed to put the power in the public's hands, transfer information more quickly between RIDOH and the public, and reduce workload on RIDOH staff. The public was able to schedule their own tests, look up their results via web browser, and complete an online survey in place of a phone interview.

The “So What”


Since late December 2020, over 100,000 individuals have completed a web-based COVID-19 survey, over 280,000 individuals viewed their positive result through the web-based system, and over 4,000 direct contacts were elicited through the online system. This represents 100,000 outbound phone calls averted, reducing workload on a strained staff and may represent quicker data transmission of key epidemiological fields to RIDOH (further analysis needed), leading to more effective public health action like cluster response.

Self-service tools were successful in having the public obtain their results without manual RIDOH intervention and in having key data sent to RIDOH quickly.

The “Now What”

As COVID-19 moves to being considered endemic, RIDOH is embarking on a landscape analysis of surveillance systems to understand what functionality is available and at what cost from Salesforce, the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System Base System (NBS), and other systems. Knowing what has been achieved with Salesforce, can similar improvements be made for other surveillance systems? Can these functionalities be employed for other surveillance systems, and can they be done so through Salesforce or other systems? The COVID-19 response has been a proof of concept that the RI public will engage with state systems to obtain results and even share key demographic and epidemiological information to inform and guide public health action through processes that do not require RIDOH staff human intervention.

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