



Technology Services Board Subcommittee – Project Synopsis

March 31, 2022

Agency: Department of Health (DOH)

Project: Healthcare Enforcement and Licensing Management System

OCIO Assessment	QA Assessment
	

Project overview

HELMS (Healthcare Enforcement and Licensing Management System) is a modernized electronic licensing system that the Department of Health is pursuing to replace the outdated legacy system. HELMS will support the licensing and regulatory needs of:

- Almost 500,000 health care professionals practicing in 86 professions across 359 credential types
- 2,500 educational and training programs across four educational and training program types
- Nearly 12,000 facilities across 21 facility types

HELMS will deliver needed improvements to the agency's licensing system, making it easier for health care professionals and facilities, boards and commissions, and the public to access and share information with the department. HELMS will provide licensees and employees better service, increase work efficiencies, and provide greater access to data on the health care system. Examples of these new improvements include:

- Allowing providers to view and manage information from one site, such as application status, specializations or endorsements, and address updates;
- Allowing employers of multiple providers to perform bulk credential renewals;
- Enabling electronic notifications of credential expiration, status changes, disciplinary actions, and continuing education due dates;
- Reducing mail processing for renewal and other processes through online transactions;
- Providing electronic access to health care facility inspection and investigation reports;
- Allowing consumers to look up provider specializations and practice locations; and
- Enabling patients and others who have filed complaints against practitioners and facilities to check complaint status online.

HELMS will include data on practice locations and health specialties for providers which will allow public health agencies, researchers, and others to identify gaps in services. This information will guide the development of services to underserved populations that will benefit many, including communities of color, underprivileged, and rural populations.

Issue statement

Using the governance processes of the HELMS Project, Salesforce was chosen as the platform to develop the new system. A solicitation for the platform integrator was conducted, and Publicis Sapient, a subcontractor of Carahsoft Technology, was selected.

The DOH Project Management Team adopted the agile development method prescribed by Publicis Sapient.

Publicis Sapient (PS) was the system integrator for HELMS for just over a year. During this time, they requested three (3) separate re-planning attempts. The first two requests were approved and implemented; however, the project did not meet velocity or quality expectations. In September 2021, DOH contracted for an independent agile consultant to assess the agile development methodology used to develop HELMS. The results of this assessment were delivered to DOH in October 2021. Identified root causes for lack of velocity and quality included: Publicis Sapient turnover (74%); domain knowledge transfer taking too long; development sprints not resulting in shippable product; and nearly all user stories are finished in the last five days of the sprint. The independent agile assessment report also exposed 21 additional issues attributed to Publicis Sapient's project leadership and agile process management.

DOH reviewed the assessment and PS request for a third re-planning attempt. DOH determined it was unlikely that PS would be able to salvage the project. Therefore, DOH denied this third request and submitted a preliminary failure to perform notice to Carahsoft. DOH worked with Carahsoft from November 2021 to February 2022 to reach agreement on the remediation plan. The parties also aligned on revised contract terms that support the project objectives including scope, schedule, cost, quality, and resource commitments.

Management strategy and readiness plan

The HELMS Project Governance Structure includes a Steering Committee comprised of the HELMS Executive Sponsor, other executive leaders from the business areas that will use and support the product, and leaders of the three independent commissions (nursing, medical, and chiropractic). The project also has an active HELMS Liaison Team of subject matter experts from each business area that is responsible for making recommendations to the Steering Committee.

The project is led by the following full-time positions: Project Director, Business Project Manager, IT Project Manager, and Organizational Change Management (OCM) Practitioner. There are also several full-time business subject matter experts dedicated to HELMS and many IT staff.

The HELMS Project Team works closely with an independent quality assurance consultant.

The OCM Practitioner has conducted several readiness assessments and utilized results in the development of an OCM strategy and the HELMS Coaching and Resistance Management Plans. A comprehensive OCM Communication Strategy has ensured extensive internal and external stakeholder engagement.

DOH contracted with a user-centered design consultant, AnthroTech. The consultants worked closely with the HELMS OCM Practitioner to ensure the engagement of a broad sample of end users, both internal and external.

AnthroTech conducted internal stakeholder interviews, user surveys (both internal and external) and observed the current system experience through internal and external usability sessions. A User Experience (UX) and Accessibility expert provided a review of HELMS. Findings from the study have been helpful during the build phase of the new system.

Beginning in October 2021, DOH began work on a 90-day quick win prototype concept, selecting three provider application types: a simple, a medium, and a complex application. This allows us an initial “quick win” with the simple registration application, where we can see minimal components for an “end to end” application process. During each prototype configuration, we will discuss the Salesforce basic architecture, design, layout, and other essential elements that can be used in future applications. We used an additive approach, where each application builds on functionality from the prior application. With each application path, we build additional functionality and stakeholder confidence by showing each process from beginning to end.

This will help us learn more about what is native to Salesforce and mitigate any unintentional custom-coding requests. We will become more familiar with the core Salesforce product as it applies to our world. Having completed all three application types, we will better estimate the time needed to configure other applications.

In addition to building our knowledge of Salesforce's “out-of-the-box” functionality, we will also create a shared vision, foundation, and history within the system integrator and our HELMS team. We will learn iteratively about the architecture and design, discussed strengths and addressed potential weaknesses, became aware of any constraints, and produced more consistent design and layout patterns that we can build on as we add more features. With this better understanding, we will develop a shared vision for HELMS and improve the velocity with each agile sprint. This will help us ensure consistency in architecture, design, layout to meet our business needs using the least amount of coding while ensuring a consistent UX experience across HELMS.

Project budget and timeline

The following tables are pending approval by the HELMS project steering committee.

Budget	Budget Allocation
Pre-Gated Funding, Feasibility Report (1/1/2017 to 6/30/17)	\$0.96M
Gate 1 – Initiation, Planning, Requirements Validation (7/1/17 to 12/31/19)	\$1.3M
Gate 2 – Procurement and Vendor Discovery (1/1/20 to 6/30/20)	\$4.3M
Gate 3 – System Build, Testing, Training (7/1/20 to 12/31/20)	\$3.9M
Gate 4 – System Build, Testing, Training (1/1/21 to 6/30/21)	\$4.90M
Gate 5 – Prototype, System Build, Testing, Training (1/1/22 to 6/30/22)	\$4.90M
Gate 6 – System Build, Testing, Training (7/1/22 to 12/31/22)	\$5.2M
Gate 7 – Final Implementation, Training, and Documentation (1/1/23 to 6/30/23)	\$2.6M
Gate 8 – Project Closure (7/1/23 to 12/31/23)	\$4.14M
Total Project Cost	\$32.2M

The milestone schedule is currently under review by the steering committee. The original Project Close was June 2023.

Key Project Milestones	Planned Date
Vendor Discovery	Jan 2022
Vendor Prototype	May 2022
Build Sprints/Demo/Retrospectives, Testing, Documentation	Jun 2023
Final UAT Testing	Jun 2023
Knowledge Transfer and System Training (end users and support team)	Jun 2023
Final System Go-Live	Jun 2023
System Stabilization & Optimization Period	Jun 2023
Contractor Warranty Period (60 days) (does not overlap with the Stabilization Period)	Aug 2023
Carahsoft Technical Handoff to DOH Information Technology Team	Aug 2023
Project Closure	Sep 2023

Key Events to Date	Date
Feasibility Study	April 17, 2017
Vendor Contract Execution	Sept 27, 2020
Sub-Contractor Termination	Nov 3, 2021
Prime Contractor Remediation Plan acceptance	Dec 2, 2021
Vendor Contract Amendment 1	Feb 7, 2022
Sub-Contractor Discovery Phase	March 18, 2022
Sprint Development and Quality Assurance	March 21, 2022