CASE STUDY

Virginia's Data-Driven Approach to Combat Substance Use Disorder

HIGHLIGHTS

- Develop, configure, and implement an easy-to-use data sharing system.
- Facilitate data-sharing across state agencies and local entities
- Perform advanced data analysis. including predictive analytics that involve the creation of risk profiles.

Introduction

The substance abuse crisis cuts across government agencies, jurisdictions, and nonprofit organizations, leaving public servants and policymakers in every corner of the U.S. searching for collaborative, evidence-based solutions.

However, reality stands in the way. The data for analysis and strategic planning is siloed across agencies and districts in disparate systems that were never designed to talk to each other. Without real-time, comprehensive insights, policymakers and those at the frontlines are caught in a reactive state while the cost of the crisis rises — in both dollars and lives.

Leaders in Virginia wouldn't settle for the status quo.

Challenge: Ad Hoc Data-Sharing Agreements Are Ineffective

When it comes to addressing emerging issues such as the opioids crisis, data-sharing is a key component to building a holistic strategy. On the organizational side, Virginia lacked a uniform approach for developing data-sharing agreements. When agencies wanted to share data with each other, it was done on a point-to-point basis, said Carlos Rivero, Virginia's chief data officer.

"Agency A and Agency B will negotiate directly with each other, and if Agency C wants data, they'll negotiate directly with Agency A," Rivero said. "There hadn't been a centralized authority or source for coordination and oversight of these activities."

To demonstrate the utility of improved data-sharing and analytics, which could then support evidence-based decision-making and policymaking, Rivero had a long checklist and a short timeline. He needed an approach that granted internal availability of, and access to, the right data to the right employees across the organization. He wanted a secure solution that could connect isolated silos across the commonwealth, promote interoperability, and generate trust in the platform.

Solution: Build Scale With a Modern Data Platform

Qlarion partnered with Tyler Technologies to help Virginia implement a powerful cross-agency data sharing platform, the Framework for Addiction Analysis and Community Transformation (FAACT).
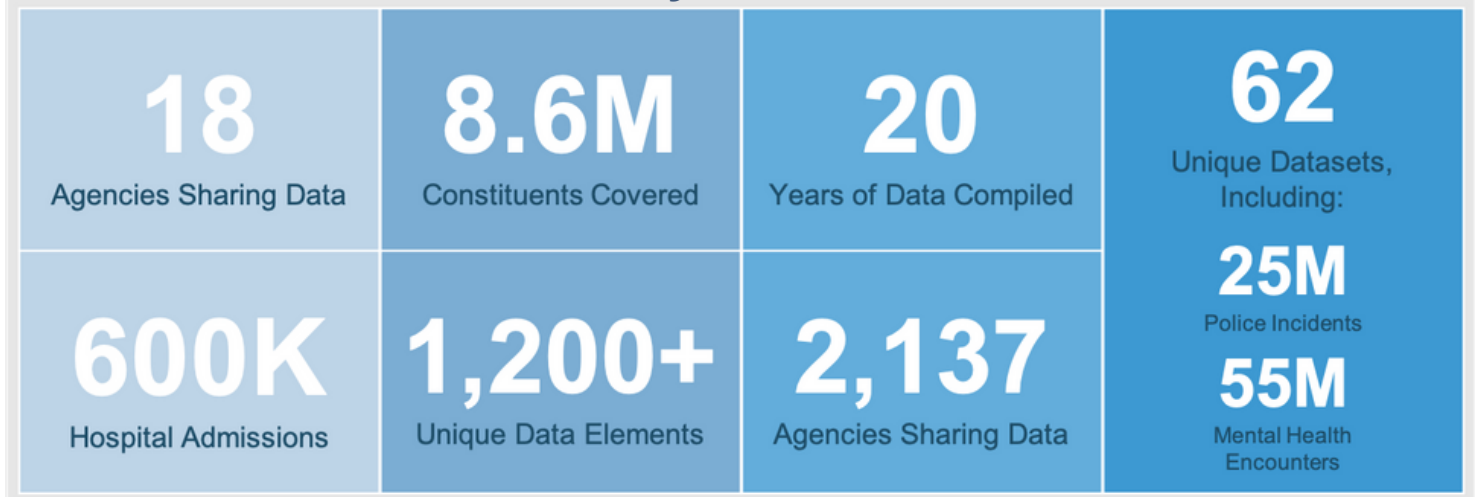
This advanced internal data-sharing platform gives users across agencies the ability to easily and securely pull data in and out of the platform, understand and analyze the data without the need for support from a data analyst, and manage the implementation of data-sharing agreements.

This approach of data-sharing isn't a one-off. There are major initiatives that cut across agencies — road safety, homelessness, workforce, and others — where this methodology can be repeated."
—Jake Bittner, CEO of Qlarion

FAACT by the Numbers

18 Agencies Sharing Data	**8.6M** Constituents Covered	**20** Years of Data Compiled	**62** Unique Datasets, Including: **25M** Police Incidents **55M** Mental Health Encounters
600K Hospital Admissions	**1,200+** Unique Data Elements	**2,137** Agencies Sharing Data	

Result: Build Trust and Collaboration

Rivero's biggest win is in changing Virginia's culture toward sharing data.

"The primary challenges have been cultural and organizational, not necessarily technical — although the technical helps instill confidence in the folks that will allow the culture to shift," Rivero said. "Through that, we've turned a corner on the attitude toward data-sharing. In 11 months, we've made a lot of progress."

"We started working together with Qlarion on the opioid project and saw how Qlarion has been able to develop the data governance around the Socrata platform, implement the master data dictionary, and do a lot of core infrastructure work to support data analytics on a sustainable basis," Rivero said. "We've been able to expand upon that and start looking at that as a more generalized approach for data governance and development of the data catalogued across the commonwealth."

"We would not be making the progress we have without Socrata and Qlarion," Rivero said. "You had people on the frontlines seeing data that had never been surfaced before —insights such as demographics on Fentanyl overdoses, when people started using, what they use, and where."

FAACT Benefits

This framework delivers insights that are critical to prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery:

- Identify demographic differences between user populations to better respond to their needs.
- Create community-specific risk profiles for addiction. Identify, investigate, and respond to spikes in overdoses.
- Adjust hospital and police staffing within specific locations to better align with community needs.
- Evaluate impact of programs on fatal and non-fatal overdoses.