



Letter from the Director

The ODJFS Office of Information Services (OIS) provides critical support for the day-to-day administration and long-term planning of the Ohio Medicaid program. OIS also has been a significant partner in the design and development of our new Medicaid Information Technology System (MITS). In fact, OIS has already begun to benefit from MITS, even before the new system is implemented. In order to implement MITS, ODJFS needed a way to link existing multiple information technology (IT) system components with MITS so they could communicate with each other

electronically. To address this need, OIS purchased and installed an Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) to support the secure transfer of electronic data files among MITS, ODJFS eligibility systems and more than 160 external entities. The ESB is the agency's first venture into Service Oriented Architecture (SOA). This month's edition of *MITS News* describes the concept of SOA and its significant benefits as a foundation of the new MITS project. I hope you find this information interesting and helpful.

—John Corlett

Service Oriented Architecture – The Platform for MITS

Today's businesses need to be agile and quickly adaptable to the changing world around them. This is especially true of the Ohio Medicaid program, which constantly needs to make minor and major changes in service definitions and pricing, eligibility standards, and advances in medical technology. The need for adaptability is a fundamental requirement for the design of MITS. MITS requirements mandate that it be built using what is known as "Service Oriented Architecture." This is an IT design philosophy based on the belief that business policies and needs should drive IT systems design, and not vice versa.

All too often, business managers request information or policy changes, only to hear from the IT division that "the IT system just can't do that." An IT system designed using SOA turns this paradigm upside down. IT systems built using SOA are designed to serve business needs. For example, they are designed to do such things as inform business leaders with real-time data documenting organizational performance, achieve successful and efficient information transfer with multiple business partners, and implement IT system changes in response to market or policy changes.

SOA is not rocket science. It is a commonsense approach to make the best use of limited resources and to position businesses to respond to the changing world around them. For MITS, SOA means that ODJFS will be able to make business decisions supported by technology instead of making business decisions constrained by technology. SOA has already begun within ODJFS, with the purchase and installation of an ESB. The ESB supports the secure transfer of electronic data files among MITS, the 30 subsystems comprising the existing Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS), ODJFS eligibility systems, and more than 160 external entities.

In simple terms, an ESB is simply an infrastructure that connects IT resources and systems, regardless of their technology. It is particularly valuable in combining old and new technologies in that it can mediate their incompatibilities, orchestrate their interactions, and make them broadly available for new uses. ESBs serve as the communication center and translator for IT systems that were previously disconnected. As such, they serve a critical role in providing IT systems with dependability, flexibility and

adaptability. They are a critical component of SOA. Implementing an ESB has not only met the needs for MITS design and development, but it has also provided a foundation for many other IT systems managed by ODJFS to communicate with one another. This advanced technology will benefit other ODJFS programs, as well as county departments of job and family services and a vast array of the agency's service providers.

MITS News Moves to a Bimonthly Schedule

Starting this month, *MITS News* is moving to a bimonthly publication schedule. Monthly publication may resume at a future date.

Questions and Answers

Q: How will all the new systems associated with MITS work with the existing state systems?

A: MITS will need to link a vast number of components and other ODJFS systems together so they can communicate with each other in an automated manner. To address this need, ODJFS purchased and implemented an Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) to support the secure transfer and communication of electronic data files between MITS, the eligibility systems and more than 160 external entities.

Q: What is an Enterprise Service Bus (ESB), and why is it important?

A: An ESB is an infrastructure that connects IT resources and systems, regardless of their technology. It is particularly valuable in combining old and new technologies in that it can mediate their incompatibilities, orchestrate their interactions, and make them broadly available for new uses.

Q: What is Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), and why is it important?

A: SOA is an IT design philosophy based on the belief that business policies and needs should drive IT systems design, and not vice versa.

Looking for more?

For past newsletter issues, FAQs, and more information about the Medicaid Information Technology System, log on to the ODJFS Web site:
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/mits/info.stm>