

CASE STUDY:

New York-based non-profit health plan implements SAS technology to streamline and improve their trend and forecast modeling

Client Scope

The largest nonprofit health plan in upstate New York was awash in data on its 1.7 million members across four upstate regions. Unfortunately, the health plan's actuarial team spent most of their time organizing the data. By using d-Wise to deploy SAS Data Integration technology, the team is now free to analyze data to better manage risk.

Challenges

With more than 100 million member and claims records, it was critical for the company have the ability to integrate and crunch data quickly to successfully analyze their business. The company was using Access databases and the amount of data was too large to manage. The team also had to deal with multiple legacy data gathering systems - the result of the four separate regional organizations that existed before coming under the BCBS umbrella. Trying to gather data from each region to analyze and drill into trends was particularly time-consuming. The organization also

needed to pull in data from Oracle and DB2 tables, and it needed to consolidate information that, in some cases, resided in different warehouses.

Solutions

While developing a robust data management platform was crucial to the success of their new membership data mart, the company was also looking for a vendor that would provide powerful analytic capabilities. They chose d-Wise for their expertise in SAS technology and technology implementation. Health actuaries spend a great deal of time analyzing and forecasting claims expenses and changes in membership. There were really no products that matched SAS in terms of forecasting capability. The organization's actuaries combined their Membership Information Nexus Environment (MINE) data solution with SAS analytic software to streamline and improve their trend and forecast modeling.

Benefits realized by client

With SAS, the health plan could just kick off a process flow and work on something else while waiting for the results to return. Depending on the process, the health plan was able to improve speed by between 40 to 70 percent. The company was in an environment where they spent 70 to 80 percent of their time scrubbing, extracting, transforming and loading data - with less than 30 percent of time spent on analysis. With SAS, in many instances, those numbers have flip-flopped.

The BCBS actuarial team now spends more time analyzing data and can deploy staffers more efficiently. In the past data preparation was so time-consuming analysts would specialize in a certain region or a certain type of analysis. Now analysts can work with data from any region and any type of analysis. The data went from a reporting tool into Access for filtering and manipulation before being placed in Excel for calculating. Now it can all be done through SAS in a fraction of the time and with greater accuracy.