



144 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
802-828-2177

Kevin Mullin, Chair
Jessica Holmes, Ph.D.
Robin Lunge, J.D., MHCDS
Tom Pelham
Thom Walsh, Ph.D., MS, MSPT
Susan J. Barrett, J.D., Executive Director

SEALED BID REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Vermont Provider Data Management and Directory

ISSUE DATE	April 1, 2022
QUESTIONS DUE	April, 12, 2022 – 4:30 PM (EST)
RFI RESPONSES DUE BY	April, 28, 2022 – 4:30 PM (EST)

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES, AND ADDENDUMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RFI WILL BE POSTED AT:

<https://gmcboard.vermont.gov/publication/rfps-contracts-grants/rfp>

THE STATE WILL MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO CONTACT INTERESTED PARTIES WITH UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH BIDDER TO PERIODICALLY CHECK THE ABOVE WEBPAGE FOR ANY AND ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES AND ADDENDUMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RFI.

STATE CONTACT:	Jessica Mendizabal
TELEPHONE:	(802) 828-2177
E-MAIL:	jessica.mendizabal@vermont.gov

CONTENTS

COVER PAGE **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

1 PURPOSE 3

 1.1 LIABILITY..... 3

 1.2 CONFIDENTIALITY 3

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION 3

3 RFI DESCRIPTION..... 4

4 CURRENT STATE 5

5 STATEMENT OF WORK..... 6

 5.1 ANTICIPATED REQUIREMENTS..... 7

 5.1.1 Business Requirements 7

 5.1.2 Functional Requirements 7

 5.1.3 On-Going Maintenance /Service Level Requirements..... 7

 5.1.4 Technical Requirements..... 7

 5.1.5 Documentation Requirements..... 7

6 REQUESTED INFORMATION 8

 6.1 COVER PAGE 8

 6.2 VENDOR QUESTIONNAIRE 8

 6.3 CONTACT INFORMATION..... 8

 6.4 EXPLANATION OF EVENTS 8

7 VENDOR QUESTIONNAIRE 9

8 APPENDIX A: COST ESTIMATE WORKSHEET 10

 8.1: COST ESTIMATE TABLE..... 10

 8.2 ADDITIONAL MATERIALS..... 10

1 PURPOSE

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued for the Green Mountain Care Board to gather input and obtain information and cost estimates in proceeding with proposals to gather information about the current state of provider data solutions and their cost estimates to develop an integrated and centralized provider data management platform that would serve as a statewide single Provider Directory that meets the requirements of many stakeholders across the State of Vermont.

The Green Mountain Care Board intends to evaluate the submissions by respondents to explore how they would meet their needs and understand the cost associated with proposed solutions. The Green Mountain Care Board shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by the vendors in the preparation of their submission, or for any work performed prior to contract issuance.

1.1 LIABILITY

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes – it does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. This request for information does not commit the State to contract for any materials or service whatsoever. Further, the State is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. Respondents are advised that the State will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any is issued. If an RFP is released, it will be posted on the Green Mountain Care Board web site: <https://gmcboard.vermont.gov/publication/rfps-contracts-grants/rfp>. It is the responsibility of the potential offerors to monitor this site for additional information.

1.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Green Mountain Care Board retains the right to promote transparency and to place this RFI into the public domain, and to make a copy of the RFI available as a provision of the Vermont access to public records laws. Please do not include any information in your RFI response that is confidential or proprietary, as the Green Mountain Care Board assumes no responsibility for excluding information in response to records requests. Any request for information made by a third party will be examined in light of the exemptions provided in the Vermont access to public records laws.

The solicitation of this RFI does not commit the Green Mountain Care Board or the State of Vermont to award a contract. This RFI is for information gathering purposes only and no vendor will be selected, pre-qualified, or exempted based upon their RFI participation.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) is an independent five-member Board whose members are appointed by the Governor for six-year terms. Per statute (18 V.S.A. § 9372), the Board's purpose is "to promote the general good of the State by improving the health of the population; reducing the per-capita rate of growth in expenditures for health services in Vermont across all payers while ensuring that access to care and quality of care are not compromised; enhancing the patient and health care professional experience of care; recruiting and retaining high-quality health care professionals; and achieving administrative simplification in health care financing and delivery.

Today, Vermont manages provider information in a dispersed manner. Each payer maintains directories, which providers struggle to keep up to date across multiple platforms. State agencies also must maintain provider information for the purposes of licensing, certification, workforce surveys, as well as for functionality associated with the state's Health Information Exchange and analytical data sets, such as the unified health care database.

A common statewide Provider Directory would reduce burden on providers, increase efficiency in state architecture, and provide a source of truth when establishing provider relationships through consistent identifiers.

For the purposes of the RFI, a Provider Directory is defined as a structured listing of the following two categories of health care providers that are classified by provider type, specialty, credentials, demographics, and service locations:

- Individual Provider: A person who provides health care services, such as a physician, nurse, dentist, or pharmacist
- Organizational Provider: Organizations that provide or support health care services, such as hospitals, counseling organizations (e.g., drug, alcohol), Federally Qualified Health Centers, etc.

Currently, there is an effort to require standardized, up to date provider directories. Several federal laws have placed additional requirements upon payers to maintain these resources and make them available to patients (e.g., CMS Interoperability and Patient Access final rule, CMS Interoperability and Prior Authorization final rule, Consolidated Appropriations Act). Vermont would like to use common standards where possible to fulfill these requirements. This would reduce burden upon providers, payers, and patients, and improve the accuracy and transparency of provider information for stakeholders across the State.

3 RFI DESCRIPTION

The State is seeking information to understand the current state of provider data solutions and their cost estimates to develop an integrated and centralized provider data management platform that would serve as a statewide single Provider Directory that meets the requirements of many stakeholders across the State of Vermont.

The RFI has the following key objectives:

- Assist the State in determining if identified requirements can be met in a cost-effective manner.
- Assist the State in determining if identified requirements can be met by available commercial-off-the-shelf alternatives, especially cloud-based Software as a Service solutions.

The State is seeking feedback on the information in this RFI and will consider any information, including partial responses, received in response to this RFI. If the State moves forward in the development of an RFP, the RFP process will be open to all respondents regardless of their decision to participate in this RFI.

The State would like detailed information about the state of current solutions, their capabilities, and their estimated costs (see Appendix A). The results should include system or vendor security features provided. Information can be presented in a pros and cons comparison per solution. The State would like recommendations on the type of department/division or entity who shall maintain the Directory (i.e., state government, contractor, etc.). This should include configuration of staffing and management required to host the Directory. The State would also like to see the methodology for determining best source for each data element. The requirements the State hopes to fulfill are detailed in the next section.

The State's provider data management and directory solution should be structured to allow a user interface for providers to keep information up to date in one location, a data model/database to move data between relevant data sources/users, and potential integration points (Figure 1). Multiple integration points are likely to be required to provide a holistic picture of providers in the State.

The State envisions that the solution will support the following high-level goals:

The State's provider data management and directory solution should be structured to allow a user interface for providers to keep information up to date in one location, a data model/database to move data between relevant data sources/users, and potential integration points (Figure 1). Multiple integration points are likely to be required to provide a holistic picture of providers in the State.

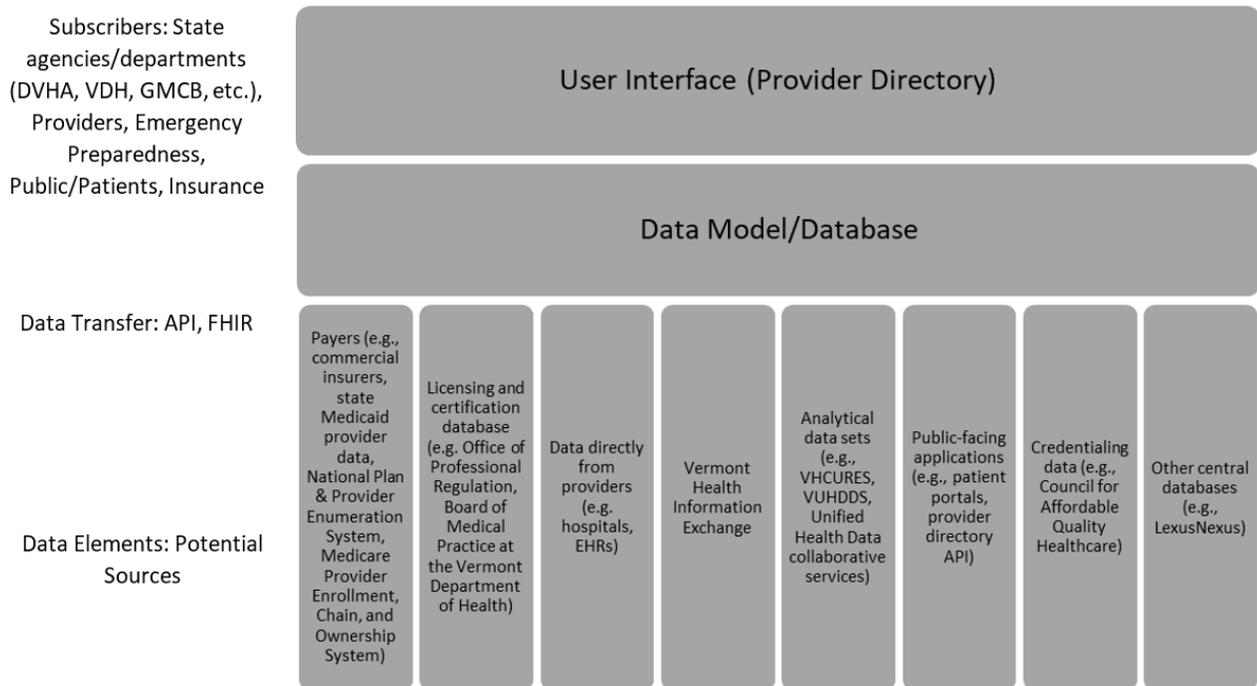


Figure 1. Proposed data structure for Vermont Provider Directory.

The solution should have the ability to:

- Maintain identity based on unique person basis (e.g., provider with multiple licenses has one unique person identifier)
- Interface with third-party applications for credentialing, validation, locating missing data
- Search/query data on the interface
- Contact providers (e.g., notifications, surveys)
- Organize relationships between providers and organizations
- Organize hierarchal relationships between providers (e.g., practices affiliated with hospitals and individuals associated with practices)
- Use and maintain standardized value sets*
- Provide different levels of access to interface based on role
- Customize frequency of updating data based on payer and/or professional requirements
- Integrate data across different platforms
- Implement hierarchical rules for determining “truth” in data set

The solution should fulfill requirements established by state and federal law:

- Federal law requires health insurers to:
 - verify and update their directories every 90 days
 - update their directories within two business days of getting notice from a provider
 - make directory information easily available on their websites
- State law requires health insurers to ([Dept. of Financial Regulation H-2009-03, subsection 6.4](#)):
 - post electronically a current and accurate provider directory for each of its network plans
 - update each network plan provider directory whenever new information is submitted by providers and at least monthly

The database should include, at least, the following data elements (*see Figure 2*):

- Provider name
- Provider NPI
 - Certificate ID (An individual provider may have more than one certificate)

- Provider role
- Provider specialty
- Credentialing
- Licensing status, licensure date, and licensing expiration date
- Provider email
- Provider phone number
- Provider fax number
- Provider gender
- Provider language
- Insurance type accepted
- Provider organization affiliations
 - Facility name
 - Address: zip code, state, city, street address
 - Facility type
 - Accessibility – physical access to building, proximity to public transportation, etc.

*<https://www.fhir.org/guides/argonaut/pd/ValueSet-provider-specialty.html>
<https://www.fhir.org/guides/argonaut/pd/ValueSet-provider-role.html>

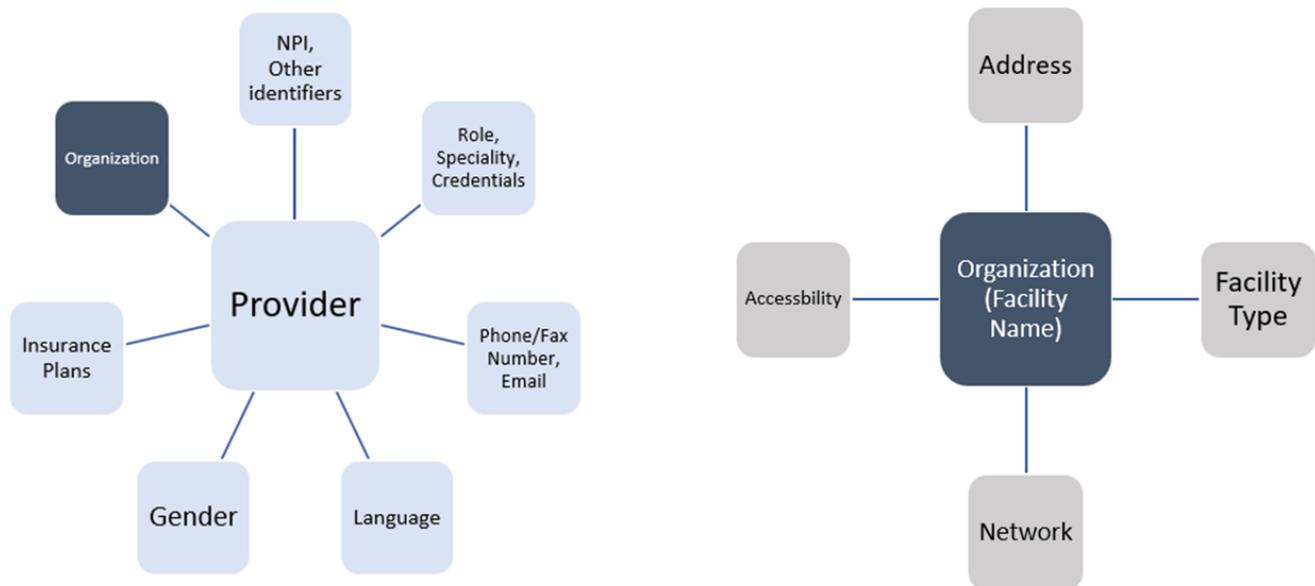


Figure 2. The diagram shows the relationship between the Provider and Organization data categories and the data needs.

4 CURRENT STATE

Green Mountain Care Board met with key staff from Department of Vermont Health Access, Vermont Department of Health, Agency of Health and Human Services Health Information Exchange, Vermont Office of Professional Regulation, BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont, UVM Health Network, and Vermont Information Technology Leaders to determine current state of provider data and gather preliminary information on Provider Directory needs. RFI draft was shared with all participating entities. The list below is not exhaustive, however provides insight to the multiple systems currently being used.

- The Provider Management Module, managed by the Department of Vermont Health Access, allows Vermont providers to enroll with Medicaid. It includes demographic information, accepting new patients, current hours, etc., and is validated every five years, therefore keeping it up to date is a challenge.
- Providers must register for a license or certificate to practice in Vermont. The Office of Professional Regulation and the Vermont Department of Health are tasked with this process depending on provider type. Information by

both departments is collected using different database systems. Information gathered is provider centric, not on an organizational level, and medical technicians and medical assistants do not need licenses or certificates.

- Vermont Department of Health is responsible for provider census required by the legislation; this is administered at the time of re-licensing. Re-licensing is completed every two years via web-based survey (Alchemer), point-in-time capture on areas of training, current practice, specialties, etc. The census data collection tool is separate from the license database systems.
- Consolidated Appropriations Act requires insurers to send updated provider information every 90 days. This requirement is only for commercial insurers. The credentialing is conducted through Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH). A known challenge of this requirement is keeping information up to date.

The following are examples example of expected use cases:

- Health Care Providers: Referring patients to specialists with required attributes (e.g., geographic location, language, gender) can be challenging if specialists are not part of a network. The process to identify the provider can be time-consuming and challenging. A Provider Directory would allow the provider to query the Directory with their specified criteria and the response would provide that information.
- Public: A patient/client may have to search multiple separate network directories to find a provider or specialist. If the Provider Directory has a public facing instance, the patient can find all provider-related information in a centralized location including information on attributes such as language or accessibility (i.e., physical access to building, proximity to public transportation, etc.).
- Emergency Preparedness: Emergency response planning requires the identification of potential providers who can assist in an emergency. Emergency response providers must meet specific credentialing criteria and must be located within a reasonable distance of the emergency event. A Provider Directory would enable a single search for a list of providers based on specific criteria such as specialty and geographic indicators. Currently, providers can sign up to receive Health Alert Network (HAN) messages.
- Green Mountain Care Board: GMCB needs a consistent provider identifier (NPI) across the spectrum of provider types to analyze health care utilization, cost, and quality, and to group providers based on different attributes (e.g., financial relationships vs clinical relationships).
- Licensing: By reviewing claims data and matching those data against a Provider Directory, the State (GMCB) could monitor for providers who are practicing with a suspended license and report findings to Vermont's Board of Medical Practice and/or the Vermont Office of Professional Regulation.

5 STATEMENT OF WORK

5.1 ANTICIPATED REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this RFI is to determine if there are solutions capable of meeting the State's anticipated requirements and to determine alternatives for meeting those requirements that are consistent with the overall vision for the Green Mountain Care Board and the State.

The State's discovery efforts to date have resulted in a desire to obtain access to solutions with the following attributes:

5.1.1 Business Requirements

5.1.2 Functional Requirements

5.1.3 On-Going Maintenance /Service Level Requirements

5.1.4 Technical Requirements

5.1.5 Documentation Requirements

6 REQUESTED INFORMATION

Each submission prepared in response to this RFI must include the elements listed below, in the order indicated. The vendor, when presenting the response, must use the following outline:

- Cover Page
- Vendor Information
- Cost Estimates
- Business and Technical Requirements

6.1 COVER PAGE

The first page of the vendor's RFI Response must be a cover page displaying at least the following:

- Response of RFI Title
- Vendor's Name
- Contact Person
- Telephone Number
- Address
- Fax Number
- Email Address

All subsequent pages of the RFI Response must be numbered.

6.2 VENDOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide your answers to the stated questions related to the project. Additional information may supplement your answers and must be attached to the RFI response.

6.3 CONTACT INFORMATION

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT: All communications concerning this RFI are to be addressed in writing to the State Contact listed on the front page of this RFI. Actual or attempted contact with any other individual from the State concerning this RFI is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification.

6.4 EXPLANATION OF EVENTS

1. Issuance of RFI

This RFI is being issued by the Green Mountain Care Board.

2. Question and Answer Period

Any vendor requiring clarification of any section of this RFI or wishing to comment on any requirement of the RFI must submit specific questions in writing no later than the deadline for question indicated on the first page of this RFI. Questions may be e-mailed to the point of contact on the front page of this RFI. Questions or comments not raised in writing on or before the last day of the question period are thereafter waived. At the close of the question period a copy of all questions or comments and the State's responses will be posted on the State's web site <https://gmcboard.vermont.gov/publication/rfps-contracts-grants/rfp>. Every effort will be made to post this information as soon as possible after the question period ends, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions.

3. Changes to this RFI

Any modifications to this RFI will be made in writing by the State through the issuance of an Addendum to this RFI and posted online at <https://gmcboard.vermont.gov/publication/rfps-contracts-grants/rfp>. Verbal instructions or written instructions from any other source are not to be considered.

4. Submission of Responses

- a. **CLOSING DATE:** Responses must be received by the State by the due date specified on the front page of this RFI. Late responses will not be considered.

- i. The State may, for cause, issue an addendum to change the date and/or time when responses are due. If a change is made, the State will inform all bidders by posting at the webpage indicated on the front page of this RFI.
 - ii. There will not be a public bid opening. However, the State will record the name, city and state for any and all responses received by the due date.
- b. **STATE SECURITY PROCEDURES: Please be advised extra time will be needed when visiting and/or delivering information to State of Vermont offices. All individuals visiting State offices must present a valid government issued photo ID when entering the facility.**
- i. During the pendency of the State emergency relating to Covid-19, State office buildings may be locked or otherwise closed to the public. If this RFI permits hand delivery of bids, delivery instructions will be posted at the entrance to the State facility. **Any delay caused by State Security Procedures will be at the respondent's own risk.**
- c. **BID DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS:**
- i. ELECTRONIC: Only electronic responses will be accepted via email.
 - ii. E-MAIL BIDS. Responses will be accepted via email submission to jessica.mendizabal@vermont.gov. Responses must consist of a single email with a single, digitally searchable PDF attachment containing all components of the response. Multiple emails and/or multiple attachments will not be accepted. There is an attachment size limit of 40 MB. It is the Respondent's responsibility to compress the PDF file containing its bid if necessary in order to meet this size limitation.
 - iii. FAX BIDS: Faxed responses will not be accepted.

5. Review and Evaluation of Responses

The review and evaluation of responses to the RFI will be performed by the Green Mountain Care Board and their designees. The evaluation process will take place in the weeks following the response due date. During this time, the RFI Manager or other the Green Mountain Care Board representatives may, at their option, initiate discussion with respondents for the purpose of clarifying aspects of their responses.

6. Vendor Demonstration of Their Product

Vendors chosen from the review process may be called on to demonstrate their products and/or service offering. These select vendors will make arrangements with the Green Mountain Care Board to demonstrate their products and/or service offering. The Green Mountain Care Board shall not be liable for any costs incurred by the vendor in preparation of its demonstration. All costs occurred are the vendor's sole responsibility. All demonstrations are for planning purposes only and do not constitute a legal bid.

7. Vendor Product Test Trial

Certain Vendor products and/or service offering may be selected after review process to be trialed by the Green Mountain Care Board, if this is an option allowable by the vendor. The test trial can last up to 90 days. Up to 2 vendors products selected will be involved with the test trial. The Green Mountain Care Board staff will provide feedback to the RFI Manager. **The selection of vendor products for a test trial does not commit the Green Mountain Care Board or the State of Vermont to award a contract. This test trial is for information gathering purposes only and no vendor will be selected, pre-qualified, or exempted based upon their RFI / test trial participation. All costs occurred are the vendor's sole responsibility. All product test trials are for planning purposes only and do not constitute a legal bid.**

7 VENDOR QUESTIONNAIRE

We are asking for a total cost estimate (low and high estimates) comprised of software, hardware, and necessary implementation services. We understand that the cost figures provided are for planning purposes only and will not be binding in any way.

8 APPENDIX A: COST ESTIMATE WORKSHEET

8.1: COST ESTIMATE TABLE (bidders can submit their own format if desired)

Item	General Requirements Description	Cost
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

8.2 ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Please provide any other materials, suggestions, cost, and discussion you deem appropriate.