Case Study

Dallas County Department of Health & Human Services

"When we needed an outbreak management system immediately that could handle multiple simultaneous users and quick protocol changes, Maven was just the ticket. Maven's easy-to-use software ensured easier data collection, sharing, integration and coordination among our epidemiologists on the front lines of Ebola containment and prevention," said Dr. Wendy Chung, Chief Epidemiologist at Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services.

The Challenge

The Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is the largest local health department in Texas, serving a population of 2.4 million people. Within the DCHHS lies the Acute Communicable Disease division, which is responsible for disease surveillance and outbreak investigations in the county. When the world-wide Ebola crisis struck in 2014 and a confirmed case appeared in Dallas, the division needed to react quickly. With any type of outbreak, response time is the differentiator – every day, hour and even minutes matter.

The department needed a user-friendly, web-based system with contact tracing, monitoring and quarantine enforcement tools, as well as the ability to input simultaneous entries from epidemiologists at different locations. Particularly for Ebola containment, contact tracing was essential so those potentially exposed to the disease could be appropriately monitored and tracked to minimize the chances of spreading the disease.

The Solution

The DCHHS selected Maven Outbreak Management software – a secure web-based communicable disease management software that tracks people who are either infected with or exposed to communicable diseases. Maven's scalability and reputation for configurability and reliability made the system a good fit for the department.

Maven's technology can be easily configured to changing policies/protocols, technologies and new emerging diseases. We worked closely with DCHHS to implement the system quickly to scale it to the county's needs for managing Ebola. The system enabled DCHHS to do the following:

• Conduct real-time contact tracing to quickly and securely track people who were either infected with or exposed to Ebola

• Analyze and validate case and contact data

• Create useful reports following the end of the outbreak

The transition to using Maven for Ebola outbreak management in Dallas County took less than three weeks to fully implement. Upon completion, health officials were able to successfully track and monitor the local Ebola outbreak.

The Results

With Maven, DCHHS was able to work faster and smarter to ensure prevention, protection and recovery for those at risk of Ebola. Electronic workflows, task assignments and analytics allowed public health officials to work together efficiently and effectively – saving time, resources and money. Although Ebola is no longer an imminent threat in Dallas, the system is still being used to track travelers coming from Ebola-affected areas.

Technology – like the data and analytics that underpin contact tracing and follow-up for a disease – is central to managing evolving communicable disease threats, like Ebola, and holds the keys to better outcomes for citizens around the world.