

By Michael J. Keegan



**Michael J. Keegan** is Managing Editor of *The Business of Government* magazine and Host/Producer of *The Business of Government Hour*. His e-mail: michael.j.keegan@us.ibm.com.

Over the past 15 years, the IBM Center for The Business of Government has sought to connect public management research with practice. We do this by sponsoring independent, third-party research from top minds in academe and the nonprofit sector, hosting weekly conversations on *The Business of Government Hour* with government executives who are changing the way government does business, and pulling the best insights from these efforts to craft each edition of our semiannual flagship magazine. Our aim is to help government leaders effectively respond to their mission and management challenges by producing practical, actionable research, while also offering these same leaders a platform from which they can inform, share, exchange, and learn from each other.

This edition of *The Business of Government* magazine surveys a variety of public management issues facing us today. Whether it's leading in the "new normal" of "doing more with less," or how the lack of resources drives the need to "innovate," "collaborate," or "change" the way you do business; some may say buzz words abound. What we seek to do is go beyond the buzz to introduce and connect our readers to actual public-sector executives who are leading agencies or initiatives that are focused on critical missions. The leaders profiled in this edition offer compelling insights, lessons learned, and, most of all, advice to others that is marked by clarity of mind and a sense of purpose.

### Conversations with Leaders

The three government executives featured represent an array of disciplines and agencies with a single constant—they are all making a difference. **David S. Ferriero**, archivist of the United States, leads the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which is more than just the nation's keeper and protector of records. It is the steward of the American story, preserving the past to protect the future. The records it holds are the original sources of that story, documenting the collective history of our nation through the actions of individuals and institutions. Yet changes in the federal government, in society, and in the nature of records themselves have prompted the National Archives to change the way it does business. Ferriero discusses NARA's transformation efforts, the rise and challenges of archiving electronic records, forging a 21st-century records management framework, and becoming a citizen archivist.



As we have seen from recent emergencies and disasters, there is always an impact on the public's health and medical care. Strengthening the country's public health preparedness and response takes many forms and complementary efforts. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) plays a critical role in seeing this through—pursuing a strategy for national health security that promotes resilient communities and health systems coordinating and working together before, during, and after disasters. **Dr. Nicole Lurie**, assistant secretary for preparedness and response at HHS, explains national health security and how we get there as a country, and outlines efforts to strengthen public health and medical preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities while also ensuring the availability of safe and effective medical countermeasures in the event of a public health emergency. **VADM Matthew Nathan**, surgeon general of the U.S. Navy, leads its Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, which has a long and cherished tradition of serving and safeguarding the health of its service members and their families. In fact, the foundation of Navy Medicine is force health protection—that is, ensuring the availability of a medically ready, healthy,

and fit force. Nathan explains force health protection and details Navy Medicine's strategic priorities, its efforts to strengthen the continuum of care for military personnel, and the advances made from medical research and development.



### Profiles in Leadership

Over the last six months, I've interviewed a variety of government executives who manifest the leadership and commitment needed to meet their varied missions. In this edition, we introduce you to three leaders who are changing the way government does business.

**Jeri Buchholz**, chief human capital officer at NASA, outlines her efforts in tackling human capital challenges facing her agency, forging an innovative workforce culture at NASA, and explains what NASA is doing right to be rated the best place to work among large federal government agencies. **Dorothy Robyn**, commissioner, Public Buildings Service (PBS) at the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), explains her efforts to address the challenges facing PBS, what she is doing to right-size PBS's real estate portfolio, the investments being made to repair and maintain the nation's public buildings, and how changing work habits and technology impact the federal government's real estate footprint. **Bryan Sivak**, chief technology officer at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) completes our profiles by detailing his efforts to advance collaboration and innovation within the department. Sivak leads efforts to liberate data, identify new ways to disseminate that data, and educate stakeholders on how to most effectively use HHS data. As entrepreneur-in-residence, Sivak also seeks to cultivate serendipitous collisions within the department, resulting in new ways to do business.

### Perspectives on Ending Veteran Homelessness

All across America, small towns and large cities are facing the social realities of homelessness and the steady increase of and demand for homeless services. Sadly, our country's veterans have been more likely than most Americans to experience homelessness, in part because of their high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, physical injuries and disabilities, and many other factors. While providing shelter and services to those most in need is critical, the national conversation is shifting from managing to ending homelessness, especially chronic homelessness among veterans. Several years ago, the federal government made a commitment to prevent and end veteran homelessness by 2015. To make this goal a reality would require the breaking down of institutional silos and increasing collaboration between federal agencies. In an effort to confront this seemingly intractable issue, two federal departments, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, have joined together to strategically align their resources and coordinate efforts to end veteran homelessness. We present the perspectives of two key leaders directly involved in this cross-agency collaboration: **Susan Angell**, executive director\*, Homeless Veterans Initiative, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and **Mark Johnston**, acting assistant secretary, Office of Community Planning and Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Both bring an exacting combination of practical knowledge and understanding of the work to be done and the progress achieved to date.



### Insights on Reshaping Public Human Services Delivery and Driving Federal Performance

During the year, I often speak with leaders who are using innovative approaches to push current limits and transform the way things are being done. In this edition, two leaders from very different fields provide their insights on reshaping public human services delivery and driving federal performance, respectively.



The country's human service system is now on an unsustainable path; its operations are too fragmented, too focused on process, and too inefficient to deliver on outcomes. The system must move in new directions—down new pathways—if it is to meet increased demand for assistance at a time of tight budgets and heightened expectations. **Tracy Wareing**, executive director, American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) shares her insights on the critical challenges and significant trends facing health and human service agencies and how her association's Pathways Initiative seeks to transform this system.

Given that government influences many facets of our lives, it is critical that we monitor how it performs and operates and use that information to shape and transform how government works. **Shelley Metzenbaum**, former associate director for performance and personnel management at the Office of Management and Budget, shares her insights on the importance of government agencies adopting proven performance management practices, how the federal performance management framework has evolved over the last two decades, and how the federal government has sought to create a culture of performance improvement.

### Forum on Fast Government: Accelerating Service Quality While Reducing Cost and Time

The IBM Center has released a special report, *Fast Government: Accelerating Service Quality While Reducing Cost and Time*, on which this forum is based. *Fast Government* examines the role of time in the mission value equation, and will focus on process innovation, disruptive technologies, predictive analytics, and other ways that leaders can make government processes work faster. Through fast government, public-sector leaders make time a key performance metric in government efficiency and effectiveness initiatives—time saved by streamlining operations, improving the quality of government services, and reducing barriers to citizen engagement. The *Fast Government* report consists of 11 essays divided into two parts.



This forum leads off with Chuck Prow's introduction to the concept of fast government and his brief overview of the various essays that comprise the report. The forum then excerpts two essays from Part One of the report on developing 21st-century strategies for fast government, and two essays from Part Two of the report on using 21st-century tools to deliver fast government. Irving Wladawsky-Berger looks at the changing structure of the American economy and the need for government to both become more efficient and to redesign public services. Robert Shea then discusses barriers to innovation, speed, and performance and presents six conditions that can enhance speed. Nicole Lazzaro discusses the use of gaming as a new approach to delivering public services quickly and effectively. Just as the use of games has risen rapidly over the past decade, mobile devices have become the most quickly adapted technology in the nation's history. Tom Suder then explores the challenge to government in using mobile technology to provide citizens with fast government.



The report on which this forum is based brings fresh insights and illuminating examples on how public-sector leaders, by focusing on time and speed, can deliver real and lasting benefits through increased mission effectiveness and lower costs. We hope that this forum will spark your interest in this report, and invite you to order or download a free copy of it and all Center material at [businessofgovernment.org](http://businessofgovernment.org). ■

*\*Editor's note: Since this interview Susan Angell has retired from public service. We wish her all the best.*