



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
HEALTH DATA ORGANIZATIONS

**What is your elevator speech?**  
*Tips & Insights for Communicating With  
Your Legislators*

NAHDO Webinar Series  
January 20, 2015

# Webinar Presenters

## **Richard Cauchi**

Program Director, Health Program

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

## **Norman Thurston**

Director, Utah Office of Health Care Statistics

Representative, Utah House of Representatives

# Data Agencies Face Unique Challenges

- ▶ Data systems involve a myriad of complex technical and political issues
- ▶ Return on Investment (ROI) is not immediate and it is difficult to correlate improvements/uses directly to the data
- ▶ Privacy and confidentiality discussions can be politically charged and are not issues easy to explain in sound bites
- ▶ Funding for data competes with other state priorities

# Explaining Importance of Data in Non-technical terms: An Example

- ▶ *A member of the Utah Health Data Committee commented yesterday that to eliminate the \$300,000 general fund support of the OHCS would be akin to buying a luxury automobile but trying to save money by eliminating the speedometer. We spend billions of dollars on healthcare each year in this state. I hope we are willing to spend \$300,000 to monitor how we are doing.*

*Testimony of Clark B. Hinckley, Vice Chair of Health Data Committee,  
Large Business Representative to The Health and Human Services  
Appropriate Committee's Pubic Hearing/Sunset Review, January 10, 2002*

# Are You Prepared?

It's not easy...but, like getting old, consider the alternative.  
The cost of doing nothing is about \$765 billion per year.

*<http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2012/Best-Care-at-Lower-Cost-The-Path-to-Continuously-Learning-Health-Care-in-America.aspx>*

*(IOM - 2009).*



**Richard Cauchi**

Program Director, Health Program

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

# Tips & Insights for Working with State Legislators: Your "Elevator Speech" and Beyond



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*



**NAHDO**

**January 20, 2015**

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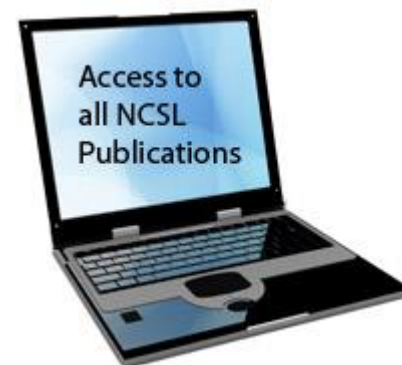
Rev 1/19/15





# National Conference of State Legislatures

- Works directly for the 50 legislatures in states + territories.
- Every elected legislator (7,383) is an NCSL member
- Bi-partisan staff and research functions.  
Health is the largest topic
- Does not take positions on state laws or legislation.
- Takes limited positions on federal issues affecting states. (No position on PPACA, Medicaid expansion, exchange)
- Resources: [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)







# Presentation Overview

- **Pep talk**
- **State legislative realities and focus**
- **Current challenges and landscape**
- **Crafting your message**
- **Strategies for educating, building, gaining support**









# YOUR ROLES

- Expert
- Information resource
- Leader
- Advocate
- Networker
- Behind-the-scenes resource

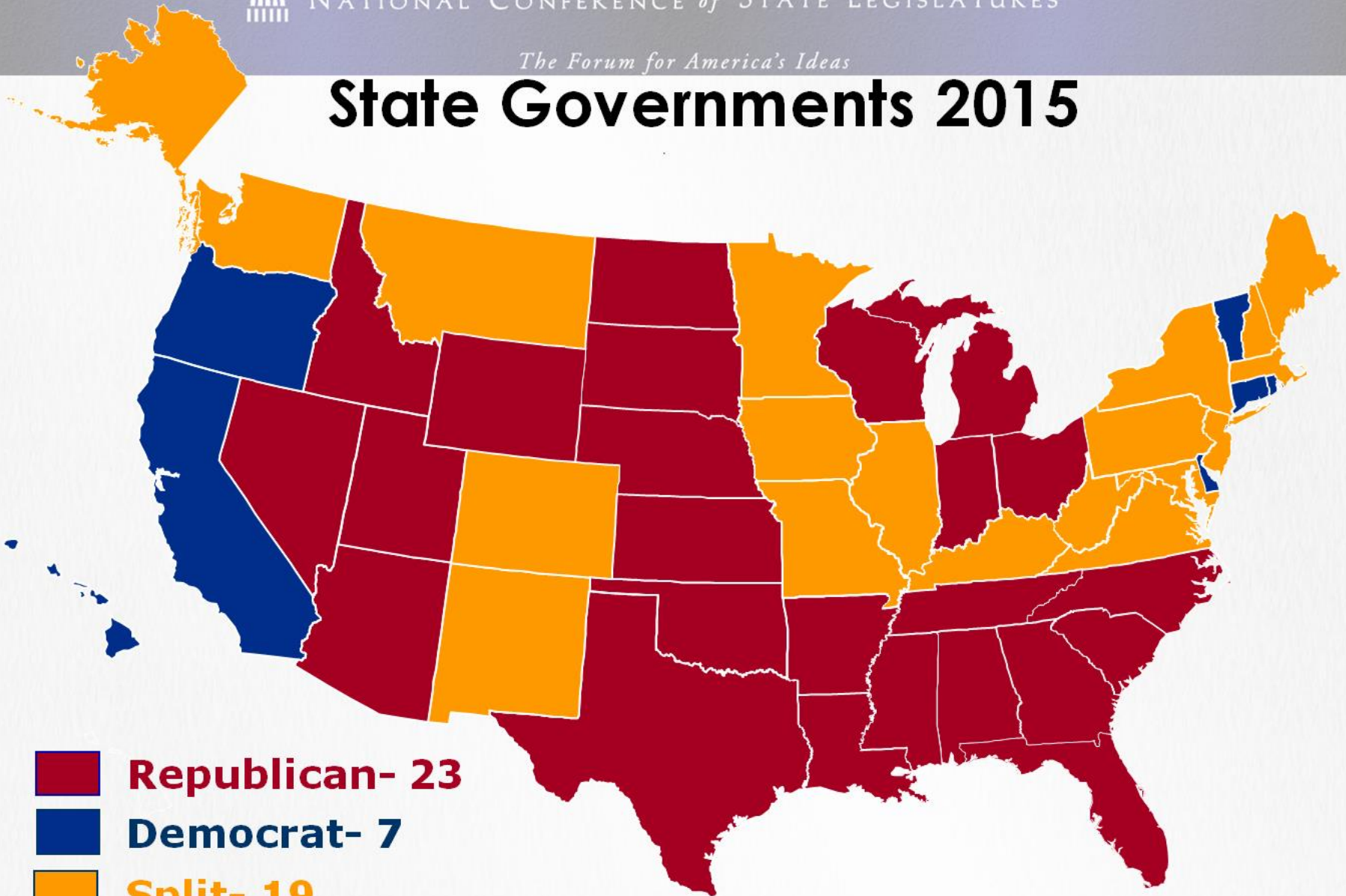
**Public policymaking needs you!**





*The Forum for America's Ideas*

# State Governments 2015

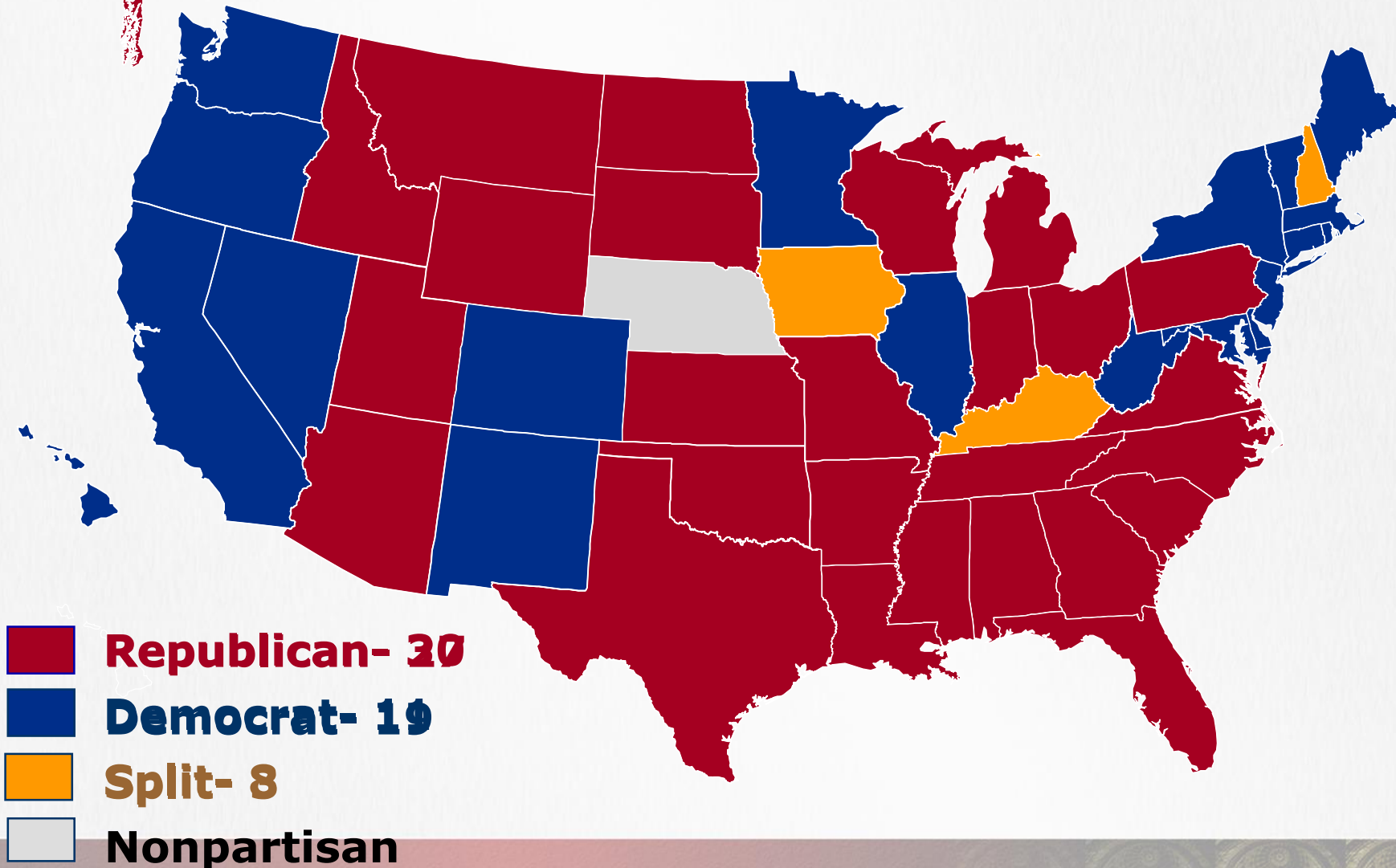


-  **Republican- 23**
-  **Democrat- 7**
-  **Split- 19**
-  **Nonpartisan**





# State Legislatures 2014







# State Legislators Are Generalists

**Dozens of major topics:**

**A to Z**

**Hundreds of bills**

**Can't be experts in all**

- **Agriculture**
- **Corrections**
- **Education**
- **HEALTH**
- **Housing**
- **Human Services**
- **Labor**
- **Transportation**
- **Zoning . . .**





# Health Issues by the Dozens

- Medicaid
- Insurance/managed care
- Pharmaceuticals
- Long-term care
- Health disparities
- Uninsured populations
- Health professions
- Health facilities
- Environmental health
- Public health
- CHIP
- Health reform/ “Obamacare”
- **Health data resources**
- Nutrition
- Injury prevention
- Mental health
- Disabilities
- Substance abuse
- Emergency services
- “Winnable Battles,” Etc. ...







**“Going through all this information we have here is kind of like trying to drink from a fire hydrant.”**

*-Former CO Rep. Mark Paschall*

**“My seatmate told me this was a bad bill. I was going to vote no on it until I realized it was my own bill.”**

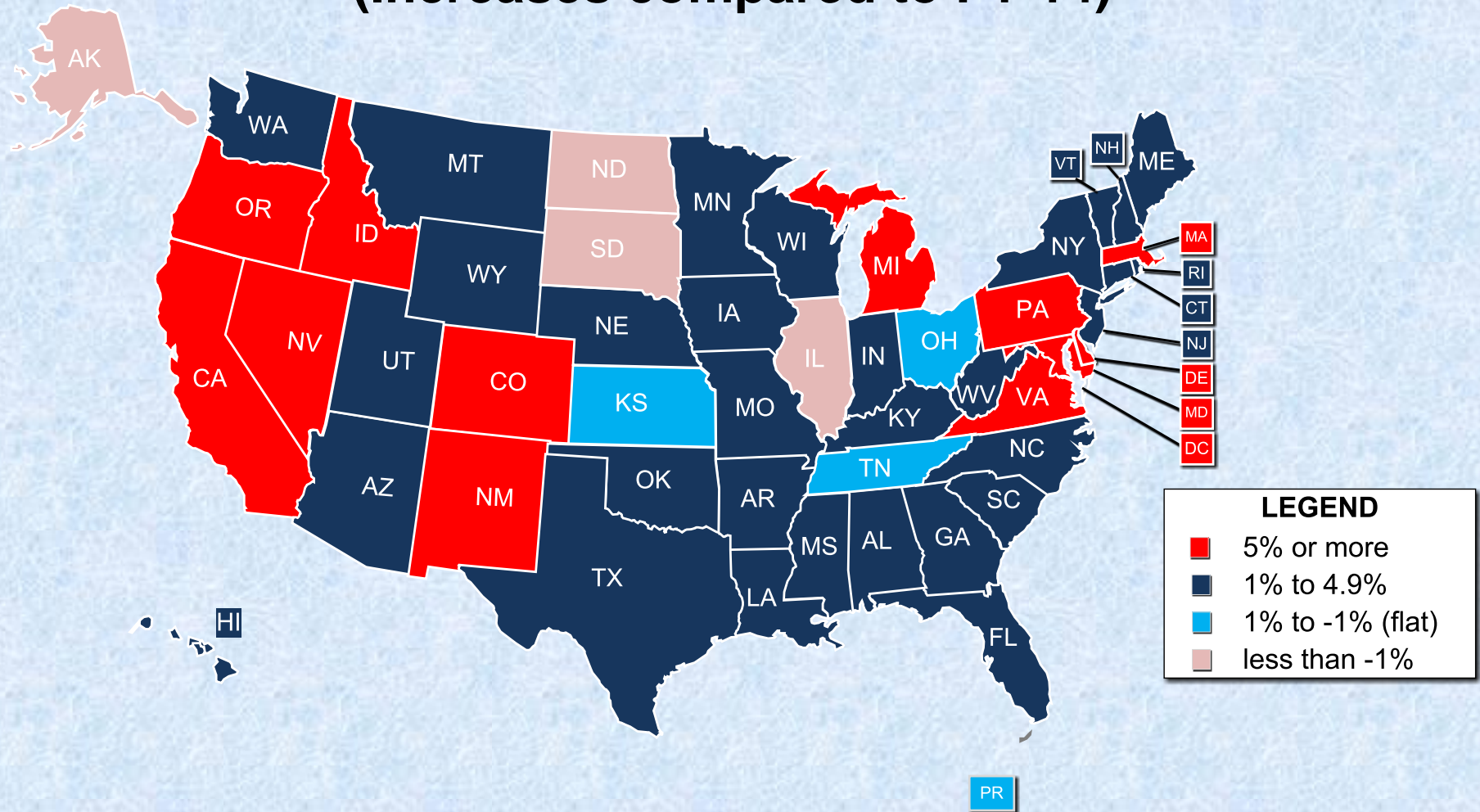
*-Former CO Sen. Ray Powers*

**Overload!!**



# State Budgets – The biggest challenge?

## General Fund Revenue FY 15 (Increases compared to FY 14)



**LEGEND**

- 5% or more
- 1% to 4.9%
- 1% to -1% (flat)
- less than -1%

Source: NCSL survey of state legislative fiscal offices, summer 2014.





# Where Do You Start?

- What are your goals?
- What entity or level of government is involved?
- Who are your likely partners?
- How much community/media awareness exists?
- Can others help (e.g., private sector, faith community)?
- Do you have data? Other needed information?
- How do you relate it to their interests & what they are focused on?
- How do you involve legislators?
  - What roles do they play?
  - What do they need to know?



# Your Message

Why should the legislator care?

What can he/she do about it?



- Share your expertise
- KISS ("Keep it Simple, Stupid")
- Keep the budget issues in mind
- Master the "elevator speech"



# 8 Tips for Success with Legislation

- **Build a team of legislative champions early**
  - R + D; House + Senate; Urban + Rural
  - Connect with a key health legislative staffer
- **Bring together the stakeholders**
- **Powerful and unexpected bed-fellows**
  - Patient advocacy groups
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - State Medical Association
  - A former governor; a state treasurer or auditor, mayor
  - Any allies in the U.S. Congress?
- **Role for a contract lobbyist?**







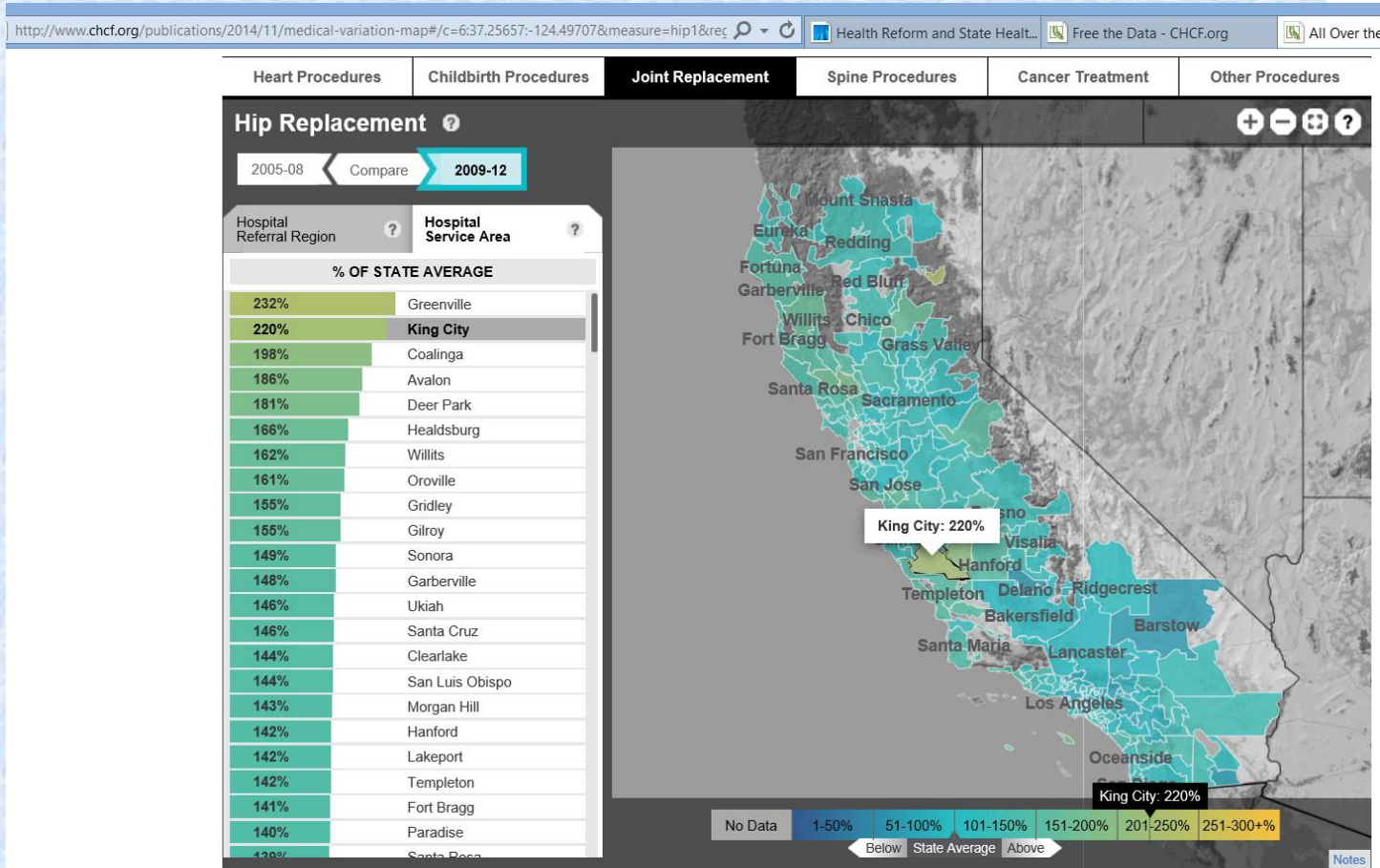
## 8 Tips, *continued*

- **Show off the states with success records**
  - Nearby or “resonating” locations
- **Show really interesting, compelling local data**
  - **Make the story human**; “Hot-spotting”
  - “This can save money”
  - **Create (or plan) an irresistible consumer-friendly tool**
  - Make it come alive! (see *California 2014*)
- **Clarify connection, or distance from, healthcare.gov**
  - “We are not building an exchange”
- **Timing: “Go public” at the right moment**
  - Announce a “break-through” compromise?
  - Success can take time...



*Example of data that individual legislators may actually use*

# Hip Replacements in California





# Conclusions

- Know what type of information policymakers need
- For legislators:
  - Do your homework—get your facts.
  - Be accurate, brief & concise
  - Be vigilant
  - Follow-up if they need more
  - Offer to help
  - Stick with it!

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**Comments? Questions?  
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