CDM DEFENDERS ASSEMBLE – HIGH VALUE ASSETS NEED YOUR HELP

75 Percent of Stakeholders Say the CDM Program, as it Stands, is Not Doing Enough to Protect HVAs

Alexandria, Va., November 16, 2020 – MeriTalk, a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT, today announced the results of its new research, "CDM: Defending HVAs." While the vast majority of stakeholders agree that Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM) program is the most effective way to coordinate enterprise-wide cyber hygiene and resilience across agencies, 75 percent say the program, as it stands, is not doing enough to protect high value assets (HVAs).

Building on MeriTalk's May 2020 "CDM The Next Chapter" study, this report features insights from nearly 100 Federal and industry stakeholders, as they evaluate the CDM program's current standing and explore recommendations for HVA defense. The CDM program, launched in 2012, provides cybersecurity tools, integration services, and dashboards to help Federal agencies improve their security posture. As the program continues to transform eight years later, 86 percent of CDM stakeholders believe a CDM approach to Federal HVAs would improve upon the current security measures protecting them.

While respondents generally state that agencies are taking action, including implementing auditing systems, implementing security control inheritance, and examining organization-wide security plans to increase HVA risk management, respondents say the program still needs work. Eighty-six percent of stakeholders agree that CDM must accelerate HVA pilots, but roadblocks, including lack of funding and the workforce gap are stalling progress. Further, 80 percent of respondents shared concerns about data discrepancies, leaving gaps in data trust and quality. Just 15 percent of stakeholders completely trust the reporting data behind the CDM dashboard and related algorithms, and just 21 percent describe the data collected from CDM sensors as high quality. To

build trust in the dashboard's data, CDM stakeholders suggest improving communication (59 percent) and standardizing data collection (52 percent), which will be critical to CDM's long-term success.

"Risk management, from a cybersecurity perspective is essential now more than ever," says Deputy Assistant Secretary and Chief Information Security Officer Paul Cunningham at the Office of Information and Technology at the Department of Veterans Affairs. "The CDM program has done a lot to help aid in cybersecurity efforts, but there's also more to be done in protecting our High Value Assets."

Looking ahead, CDM's ability to protect HVAs depends on quality sensor data and expanding to cloud and mobile environments. Stakeholders report that expanding to mobile environments (57 percent), the new Federal CDM dashboard (41 percent), and DEFEND task orders (38 percent) are very important to CDM's ability to protect Federal HVAs. The most important to CDM's ability to protect Federal HVAs include expanding to cloud environments (63 percent) and quality sensor data (59 percent), according to stakeholders. Over the next year, CDM stakeholders would like to see the program focus improvements on collaboration, training, and dashboard data.

"We've seen CDM take great strides over the years, but it's time to look further," says Steve O'Keeffe, founder, MeriTalk. "CDM stakeholders are communicating their feedback to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the CDM program is all ears. CDM defenders assemble – to help protect Uncle Sam's cybersecurity."

"CDM Defending HVAs" is based on an online survey of nearly 100 Federal civilian government IT managers, vendors, contractors, and systems integrators in September 2020. The study is underwritten by Duo Security, Gigamon, Keysight Technologies, SailPoint, and Yubico. The report has a margin of error of ±10.19 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. To download the full report, please visit https://www.meritalk.com/study/defending-hvas/

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