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## History

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In 1878, Congress authorized the U.S. Marine Hospital Service (forerunner of the Public Health Service) to collect reports from U.S. consuls overseas about local occurrences of diseases such as cholera, smallpox, plague, and yellow fever. This information was used to institute quarantine measures to prevent introducing or spreading these diseases in the United States.

In 1879, a Congressional appropriation funded collecting and publishing reports of these notifiable diseases. The authority for weekly reporting and publishing of these cases was expanded by Congress in 1893 to include data from states and municipal authorities.

To improve the uniformity of the data, Congress in 1902 directed the Surgeon General to provide specific forms to be used for collecting and compiling these data and for publishing reports at the national level.

In 1912, state and territorial health authorities – in conjunction with the Public Health Service (PHS) – recommended immediate telegraphic reporting of five infectious diseases and the monthly reporting by letter of 10 additional diseases. That year, the first annual summary of The Notifiable Diseases included reports of 10 diseases from 19 states, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii. By 1928, all states, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, were participants in the national reporting of 29 specified diseases.

In 1950, Alexander Langmuir, Director of CDC's Bureau of Epidemiology, recognized the importance of state input in reporting communicable diseases, and asked the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) to convene the state epidemiologists and charge them with the responsibility of deciding which diseases should be reported nationally. A year later, in 1951, a fully documented list of national notifiable diseases was generated by a conference of state and territorial epidemiologists. The Conference of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (known today as the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists – CSTE) was formally established in 1955. CSTE continues to hold the responsibility for defining and recommending which diseases and conditions are reportable within states and which of these diseases and conditions will be voluntarily reported to CDC.

In 1961, CDC assumed responsibility for collecting and publishing data concerning national notifiable diseases, and began publishing the *MMWR* with notifiable diseases data on January 13, 1961.

## Partnerships

CDC works in partnership every day with 57 state, local, territorial, and health departments to improve NNDSS. NNDSS staff and health departments also work closely with the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (<http://www.cste.org>) (CSTE). CSTE, as the voice of the states, works in collaboration with CDC programs to determine changes to the list of national notifiable conditions.

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Office of Public Health Scientific Services (OPHSS) (<http://www.cdc.gov/ophss/>)

Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services (CSELS) (<http://www.cdc.gov/ophss/csels/>)

Division of Health Informatics and Surveillance (DHIS) (<http://www.cdc.gov/ophss/csels/dhis/>)

National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nndss/>)