

# NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

## WHAT IS SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE?

Syndromic surveillance provides public health officials with a timely system for detecting, understanding, and monitoring health events. By tracking symptoms of patients in emergency departments—before a diagnosis is confirmed—public health can detect unusual levels of illness to determine whether a response is warranted.

Syndromic data can serve as an early warning system for public health concerns such as flu outbreaks and have been used in responses for opioid overdoses, e-cigarette or vaping product use-associated lung disease, Zika virus infection, and natural disasters.

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

NSSP is a collaboration among CDC, federal partners, local and state health departments, and academic and private sector partners who have formed a community of practice. They collect, analyze, and share electronic patient encounter data received from emergency departments, urgent and ambulatory care centers, inpatient healthcare settings, and laboratories.

The electronic health data are integrated through a shared platform—the BioSense Platform. The public health community uses analytic tools on the platform to analyze data received as early as 24 hours after a patient's visit to a participating facility. Public health officials use these timely and actionable data to detect, characterize, monitor, and respond to events of public health concern.

## ABOUT THE NSSP COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

NSSP promotes a community of practice in which participants come together virtually to share information, build knowledge, develop expertise, and solve problems aimed at improving syndromic surveillance practice. The NSSP Community of Practice includes public health jurisdictions that contribute data to the NSSP BioSense Platform, public health practitioners who use local syndromic surveillance systems, CDC programs, other federal agencies, partner organizations, hospitals, healthcare professionals, and academic institutions. The community of practice leverages the expertise and resources of its members to strengthen and advance syndromic surveillance practice and the use of syndromic surveillance platforms, including the NSSP BioSense Platform.

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) partners with NSSP to cultivate, facilitate, and maintain the NSSP Community of Practice in accordance with cooperative agreement #6NU38OT000297-02-01: Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services through National Partnerships to Improve and Protect the Nation's Health.

## ABOUT THE BIOSENSE PLATFORM

Evolving from activities to address congressional mandates in the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-188, NSSP provides syndromic surveillance practitioners access to and use of the cloud-based BioSense Platform, a secure integrated electronic health information system with standardized analytic tools and processes. These tools enable users to rapidly collect, evaluate, share, and store syndromic surveillance data.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- More than 6,200 health care facilities covering 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Guam contribute data to the BioSense Platform daily.
- Within 24 hours of a patient's visit, data are available to NSSP for analysis.
- Currently, 73% of the nation's emergency departments contribute data to NSSP (or the BioSense Platform).
- Over 6 million electronic health messages are received by the BioSense Platform every day.

---

Access the NSSP website at  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nssp/>  
for more information about this program.

---



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services