

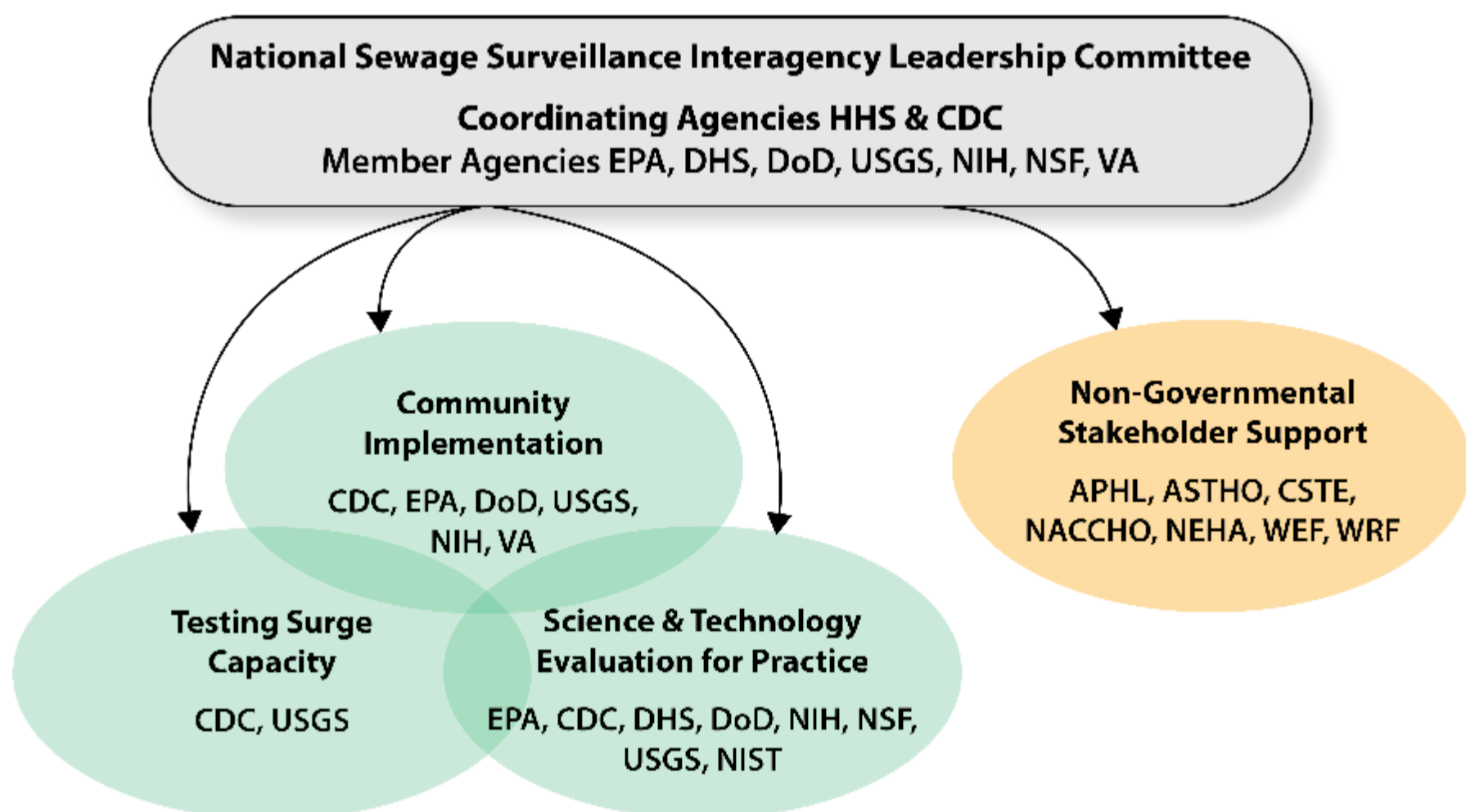


National Wastewater Surveillance System (NWSS)

Federal Coordination and Partnering for Wastewater Surveillance

Wastewater (also called sewage) testing for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) can be helpful to public health agencies and government officials as a novel complement to existing COVID-19 surveillance systems. Since SARS-CoV-2 can be shed in the feces of people with symptomatic or asymptomatic infection, wastewater surveillance can capture data on both types of infection. In addition, depending on the frequency of testing, sewage surveillance can be a leading indicator of changes in COVID-19 burden in a community. Agencies across the federal government are partnering to support coordinated federal efforts, including management and operations, to assist state, tribal, local, and territorial communities to implement procedures for wastewater-based COVID-19 disease surveillance.

Federal Partnering Framework for Wastewater Surveillance



National Sewage Surveillance Interagency Leadership Committee

To facilitate federal coordination, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and CDC have convened the National Sewage Surveillance Interagency Leadership (NSSIL) Committee. NSSIL member agencies support CDC in developing and implementing the National Wastewater Surveillance System (NWSS) to collect, analyze, and integrate wastewater-based COVID-19 data with COVID-19 case and syndromic data to assist state and local partners to make response decisions.

The NSSIL Committee is made up of representatives from the following federal agencies:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [Department of Health and Human Services !\[\]\(31b03e46ee8a80a1f1467b8c03bd76e8_img.jpg\) \(HHS\)](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency !\[\]\(7d9665ff04f9d2270c38081c6215a724_img.jpg\) \(EPA\)](#)
- [Department of Homeland Security !\[\]\(7cea648fec4dfc1e99934873e9173b69_img.jpg\) \(DHS\)](#)
- [Department of Defense !\[\]\(48ceb66414885cacc3f139b4fa359213_img.jpg\) \(DoD\)](#)
- [United States Geological Survey !\[\]\(01a1fc700f38e6e09ee62e6a9c54d804_img.jpg\) \(USGS\)](#)
- [National Institutes of Health !\[\]\(833c1865792a2399365d8193854ceab7_img.jpg\) \(NIH\)](#)
- [National Science Foundation !\[\]\(5b4802b5ab32e2afe0a3214e088c55e2_img.jpg\) \(NSF\)](#)
- [Department of Veterans Affairs !\[\]\(c1a72aaa635814897c20812b2e4c560c_img.jpg\) \(VA\)](#)

Since July 29, 2020, the Committee has met monthly to exchange information and discuss federal agency-specific missions, roles, activities, and stakeholder engagement related to wastewater-based COVID-19 disease surveillance. The NSSIL Committee also encompasses federal interagency workgroups and functional subunits, including:



- Implementation and Planning Workgroup
 - Develops and implements the [National Wastewater Surveillance System](#), sewage sampling and testing capacity, and guidance documents for sewage sampling, testing, and data interpretation for public health action
 - Member agencies: CDC, EPA, DoD, DHS, USGS, NIH, VA
- Science & Technology Evaluation for Practice Workgroup
 - Shares information to prioritize and coordinate federal research and development activities on SARS-CoV-2 wastewater sampling, testing, and data interpretation; organizes scientific forums for the public and partner organizations
 - Member agencies: CDC, EPA, DHS, DoD, NIH, NSF, USGS, [National Institute of Standards and Technology !\[\]\(815df092dd722ee9268ef8e6d0193e3a_img.jpg\) \(NIST\)](#)
- Wastewater Testing Surge Capacity
 - Provides timely, as-needed wastewater testing capacity
 - Member agencies: CDC, USGS

The federal government is also coordinating with non-governmental organizations including:

- [Association of Public Health Laboratories !\[\]\(c6a8736a601a632e2c96605cf66055ed_img.jpg\) \(APHL\)](#)
- [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials !\[\]\(64ef2b19d70b31fbbfce0e0e2aa3d7b4_img.jpg\) \(ASTHO\)](#)
- [Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists !\[\]\(9ba1c633ca37327550476fd7d0d00348_img.jpg\) \(CSTE\)](#)
- [National Association of County and City Health Officials !\[\]\(9123a11efb62a56709757215846100c3_img.jpg\) \(NACCHO\)](#)
- [National Environmental Health Association !\[\]\(81ed9b526bb4d794d4b41c492b59462a_img.jpg\) \(NEHA\)](#)
- [Water Environment Federation !\[\]\(73ff443d232f42a7f7c62fc0b625b197_img.jpg\) \(WEF\)](#)
- [Water Research Foundation !\[\]\(1875783f027eea357c44cf6b28874dc9_img.jpg\) \(WRF\)](#)

Additional federal agency resources are available on COVID-19 sewage surveillance, SARS-CoV-2 sampling and testing activities, and related research support:

- EPA
 - [Research on COVID-19 in the Environment !\[\]\(e27c4336460e9e6729a19580c0456728_img.jpg\)](#)
 - [Coronavirus and Drinking Water and Wastewater !\[\]\(1a140e8db538fd46d58af9f9540232fd_img.jpg\)](#)
- NIH
 - [Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics \(RADX\) !\[\]\(5a658b86f2c8900a276c586c1f8f9f2f_img.jpg\)](#)

- NIST
 - [A NIST-Hosted Webinar on Measuring SARS-CoV-2 in Wastewater and Fecal Material: A Call for Standards](#) 
- NSF
 - [NSF awards rapid response grants to support COVID-19 research](#) 

Last Reviewed: March 9, 2023

Was this page helpful?

Yes

Partly

No