

# NSSP UPDATE



October 2016

## Welcome to *NSSP Update*

*NSSP Update* provides monthly news about the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP). NSSP embodies collaboration, particularly in the development of its BioSense Platform, a secure cloud-based computing environment that hosts standardized, shared tools to rapidly collect, evaluate, store, and share data. *NSSP Update* will keep you in touch with the latest advancement in the platform's development.

If a colleague forwarded this issue to you, we encourage you to [subscribe at this link](#) to ensure that you receive future issues.

## Shut-down of Legacy Applications: What People Are Asking

NSSP's new BioSense Platform offers tools with far more analytic capabilities than those available with the current BioSense 2.0 "legacy" application. Understandably, some practitioners are apprehensive about leaving the BioSense 2.0 data environment they use daily. That's why we want to gently nudge those system users toward the new BioSense Platform by publicizing its capabilities. We also want to work closely with sites to understand any data requirements that would NOT be met by the BioSense Platform in order to devise ways to provide the functionality needed.

Here are our responses to a couple questions we're being asked:

### 1. **When will CDC shut down the legacy BioSense 2.0 front-end web application and block access to phpMyAdmin?**

CDC plans to discontinue both the BioSense 2.0 front-end web application and access to legacy phpMyAdmin in December 2016. (The specific date will be announced.) If failures related to BioSense 2.0 or phpMyAdmin occur between October and December, each one will be evaluated, but it might not always be possible to provide remedial support.

### 2. **Will sites have access to BioSense 2.0 legacy data via the DataMart after CDC shuts down legacy BioSense and phpMyAdmin applications?**

CDC is converting legacy data to the BioSense Platform. Once the conversion is complete, sites will be able to use the BioSense Platform to access data. Until then, the hope is that access to a "final" copy of the MUB and the Stage 1 Archive from the legacy system will suffice. After the conversion, this copy of the MUB and the Stage 1 Archive will be archived and, most likely, not readily available.

If this conversion process will NOT meet your needs, please contact the service desk (<http://support.syndromicsurveillance.org>).

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## Syndromic Surveillance in Action

### NSSP's Role During a Public Health Disaster

Natural and man-made disasters, evolving diseases that spread in novel ways, and environmental changes are disruptions that syndromic surveillance (SyS) may detect and monitor in nearly real-time, allowing practitioners to analyze data almost immediately.

The analysis tools and data on the NSSP BioSense Platform differ from those of other public health surveillance programs. Traditional health surveillance programs, while tried and true, employ predetermined lists of reportable topics that are neither timely nor flexible during the early stages of a public health event.



Because most data collected by the BioSense Platform are immediate and relevant to a range of public health issues, practitioners have considerable flexibility in how they categorize data or search by key word or phrase. This comes at the expense of specificity yet plays an important role in the early stages of an event. For example, SyS could be used to monitor exposure to wildfire smoke associated with cardiopulmonary emergency department (ED) visits in rural areas. In exposed counties, practitioners might observe significant increases in asthma, chronic obstructive

pulmonary disease, pneumonia, and acute bronchitis. Practitioners might also see an increase in ED visits associated with cardiopulmonary symptoms and heart failure.

A practitioner's ultimate goal should be to integrate syndromic with traditional surveillance methods. Short-term, the immediacy of data potentially makes SyS a practical early-warning indicator during a public health disaster. Long-term, practitioners can use SyS with traditional reporting and other surveillance to monitor events that require further public health investigation or response.

**SyS as an Early Warning Indicator**—During the early stages of an event, practitioners can use SyS data to better understand an event's significance and to answer questions such as *What lab tests should I order? What specimens should I collect and from what areas? What should a case definition look like for other reporting methods?* Then, as relevant information from traditional health surveillance systems and data sources becomes available, practitioners can integrate all available data to enhance their understanding of events and to assist public health officials in decision making.

**SyS as a Monitoring System**—During later phases of an emergency response, practitioners can use SyS data to evaluate the effectiveness of preventive actions already being taken or to gauge a community's resilience. Practitioners can even integrate new data sources into the BioSense Platform, although not always immediately. For example, members of a Disaster Medical Assistance Team could provide ad-hoc data feeds of medical records to the BioSense Platform. The BioSense Platform's ESSENCE application is configured to receive ad hoc data feeds, which at certain times might provide the only available representation of "on-the-ground" responses and, therefore, enhance situational awareness.

The bottom line? Syndromic surveillance should be integrated more fully into public health practice. Its flexibility and near real-time data provide timely insight into trends and complement data being gathered through traditional surveillance.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>October 11, 2016</b>	Phase 3 Group 5 Orientation and Adminer Webinar: 1:00 PM–2:00 PM EDT
<b>October 13, 2016</b>	Phase 3 Group 4 Production Sign-off
<b>October 18, 2016</b>	Phase 3 Group 5 Access & Management Center (AMC) and ESSENCE Webinar: 1:00 PM–2:00 PM EDT

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UPDATES

- Experts from Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory conducted training on ESSENCE at the 2016 Public Health Informatics Conference. The [presentation \(PDF\)](#) is posted on the NSSP website.
- Two more groups will transition to the BioSense Platform's new data flow: on September 1, 2016, Phase 3 Group 2 signed off to move into production. On September 22, 2016, Phase 3 Group 3 signed off.
- September 20, 2016      Webinar: Phase 3 Group 4 Transition Kick-off
- Mondays                      Onboarding Support Calls: 3:00 PM–4:00 PM EDT
- Wednesdays                Data Validation Support Calls: 3:00 PM–4:00 PM EDT

## PHASE III SCHEDULE AND UPDATE: TRANSITION TO ESSENCE

The Phase 3 Transition Schedule to ESSENCE and the activities involved are shown below. Every 4 weeks, nine sites will transition. The NSSP Team will conduct two webinars with each set of sites. The first webinar will orient system users to the transition plan and Adminer (an SQL tool for viewing MS SQL data in the BioSense Platform Archive). The second webinar will introduce the Access & Management Center and ESSENCE.

If your site anticipates a schedule conflict, please contact <http://support.syndromicsurveillance.org>.

Quick Start Guides to AMC, Adminer, and ESSENCE will help users navigate the platform tools to conduct routine syndromic surveillance or review data. During the transition, the NSSP Team will schedule conference calls to answer questions and share information.

Phase 3 Transition Schedule (updated 5/4/2016)	Week 29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52
	18-Jul — 22-Jul	25-Jul — 29-Jul	1-Aug — 5-Aug	8-Aug — 12-Aug	15-Aug — 19-Aug	22-Aug — 26-Aug	29-Aug — 2-Sep	5-Sep — 9-Sep	12-Sep — 16-Sep	19-Sep — 23-Sep	26-Sep — 30-Sep	3-Oct — 7-Oct	10-Oct — 14-Oct	17-Oct — 21-Oct	24-Oct — 28-Oct	31-Oct — 4-Nov	7-Nov — 11-Nov	14-Nov — 18-Nov	21-Nov — 25-Nov	28-Nov — 2-Dec	5-Dec — 9-Dec	12-Dec — 16-Dec	19-Dec — 23-Dec	26-Dec — 30-Dec
Illinois (includes Cook) / Massachusetts / Kentucky / Arizona / Mississippi / Arkansas / West Virginia / Kansas / Houston, TX																								
Nevada / Utah / New Mexico / Denver Public Health / Riverside, CA / Idaho / North Dakota / Montana / Alaska																								
Stanislaus, CA / Linn County, IA / Santa Clara, CA / Nevada, CA / Florida / Ohio / Pennsylvania / New York / North Carolina																								
Georgia / New York City / New Jersey / Indiana / Tarrant County TX / Missouri / Louisiana / Maryland / Washington																								
Oklahoma / Minnesota / Connecticut / South Carolina / Oregon / Maine / Nebraska / New Hampshire / Rhode Island																								
Boston Public Health Commission / County of Sacramento, CA / District of Columbia / Delaware / San Diego, CA / Hawaii / Vermont / South Dakota / San Mateo, CA																								

**Weekly Transition Activities (updated 4/29/2016)**

Week 1	Weeks 2 and 3	Week 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDC presents transition plan and conducts orientation to Adminer</li> <li>Users access Adminer to view new BioSense Platform Archive</li> <li>Users confirm accuracy of Master Facility Table</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDC leads orientation to the Access &amp; Management Center (AMC) and ESSENCE</li> <li>Users set up accounts and data access via AMC</li> <li>Users learn ESSENCE functionality and use it to visualize syndromic surveillance data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sites transition to production (new) data flow</li> <li>CDC begins converting legacy data from BioSense 2.0 front-end application to BioSense Platform Archive and into ESSENCE</li> </ul>

**ONBOARDING**

**Onboarding Support**

Conference calls are held every Monday, 3:00 PM–4:00 PM EDT, to discuss the process and answer questions in a group forum. Requests received throughout the preceding week will be discussed during this call.

**Data Validation Support**

Conference calls are held every Wednesday, 3:00 PM–4:00 PM EDT, to assist with data validation compliance. For more information or to download the template for validating data, contact the service desk: <http://support.syndromicsurveillance.org>.







