

NSSP UPDATE



November 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](#) to ensure that you receive future issues.

“Legacy Data Transition Plan” Moves Forward

Good news for sites patiently awaiting easier access to legacy data. The NSSP Team has developed requirements to move BioSense legacy data into the new production environment. On October 13, 2016, NSSP kicked off a pilot program with system users in Tennessee to gauge their reaction, help NSSP prepare for issues that might come up during full-scale implementation, and guide NSSP in allocating time and resources for the transition. The pilot ended in October, and the NSSP Team is finalizing the Legacy Data Transition Plan for presentation to program participants.

Transition to ESSENCE on Schedule

The transition to ESSENCE is progressing as planned, with sites scheduled to transition by late December 2016. “Really like the rollout process,” says Bill Stephens, Informatics Manager in the Office of Public Health Informatics, Tarrant County Public Health, Texas. “I think you guys have aced it. The system looks wonderful.” Stephens’ team, which moved to production October 17, 2016, brings the total sites in production and using ESSENCE to 36. After each site transitions, the NSSP Team continues to monitor the process and work closely with sites to ensure data feeds and processing perform as intended.

Training Opportunity: Learn About ESSENCE at the ISDS 2016 Annual Conference

Mark your calendars. At the International Society for Disease Surveillance (ISDS) 2016 Annual Conference (December 6–8, 2016), experts from Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory will lead a workshop on ESSENCE features and functions. Attendees will learn the core paths to visualizing and analyzing data. Topics will range from developing simple queries and alert algorithms to understanding how ESSENCE processes Chief Complaints. ESSENCE training is open to all registrants of the ISDS Annual Conference and is offered at no additional cost. To register for the conference and reserve a seat, visit <http://www.syndromic.org/annual-conference/2016-isds-conference>. The training program content and learning objectives are on the ISDS website: <http://www.syndromic.org/annual-conference/2016-isds-conference/scientific-program/essence-training>.

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Annual NSSP Grantee Meeting, 2017

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Health Informatics and Surveillance is hosting its second Annual National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) Grantee Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, on February 6–8, 2017. This meeting is designed for public health professionals who work for state and local health departments and want to advance—and share—their knowledge of syndromic surveillance. Topics will include Meaningful Use, NSSP Community of Practice, performance measures, and data quality. More information on the Grantee Meeting is forthcoming.

Please contact your project officer if you have questions. Help us broaden the vision for syndromic surveillance by attending the Annual NSSP Grantee Meeting, 2017.

NSSP Awards Funding for 2017 ESSENCE Enhancements

NSSP's BioSense Platform is shaping up as planned: the Platform hosts essential analytic tools, the NSSP Team has long-term plans to evaluate additional tools and applications, and ESSENCE has been adapted to meet the community's most pressing needs. Once sites are fully operational and begin sharing data, the NSSP will work with the community to further refine ESSENCE. To ensure continuity of operations and maintenance support of ESSENCE, the NSSP Team has awarded a contract to Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. The contract will also be used to integrate LabCorp data into ESSENCE. LabCorp provides physicians, hospitals, and pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies with a range of high-quality diagnostic testing and services to improve patient care.

Reminder: Monthly Maintenance and Vendor Patches

Each month, NSSP maintains software and installs vendor patches to the BioSense Platform staging and production environments. These changes are done on *different* days, so make a note of the days and times:

- Staging—Updates occur **second Thursday** of each month (6:00 AM–10:00 AM EST).
- Production—Updates occur **third Thursday** of each month (6:00 AM–10:00 AM EST).

These monthly patches will require restarting all BioSense Platform servers; the servers may become unavailable at any time during this patch.

If these times conflict with your work, please contact the [NSSP Service Desk](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 1, 2016	Phase 3 Group 6 begins 4-week transition: Orientation and Adminer Webinar
November 3, 2016	Phase 3 Group 5 Production Sign-off
November 8, 2016	Phase 3 Group 6: Access & Management Center (AMC) and ESSENCE Webinar
November 23, 2016	Phase 3 Group 6 Production Sign-off
February 6–8, 2017	Annual NSSP Grantee Meeting, 2017; Atlanta, Georgia

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UPDATES

- Phase 3 Group 5 attended the Orientation and Adminer Webinar on October 11, 2016; the group attended the Access & Management Center (AMC) and ESSENCE Webinar on October 18, 2016.
- Phase 3 Group 4 signed off and moved into production on October 17, 2016.
- Mondays Onboarding Support Calls: 3:00 PM–4:00 PM EST
- Wednesdays Data Validation Support Calls: 3:00 PM–4:00 PM EST
- 2nd Thursday of Month Scheduled vendor patches in staging environment: 6:00–10:00 AM EST
- 3rd Thursday of Month Scheduled vendor patches in production environment: 6:00–10:00 AM EST

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

ONBOARDING UPDATES

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>.



MASTER FACILITY TABLE UPDATES

CDC takes steps to make sure facility information is accurate and consistently stored in a Master Facility Table, or MFT. The MFT captures metadata about facilities that will enhance a user's ability to categorize and compare surveillance data on the basis of facility properties—for example, by *patient class*. The MFT is essential for managing data access.

This table shows CDC's progress toward standardizing data in the MFT across facilities that input data to NSSP's BioSense Platform. To check a site's progress, match the accompanying icon to the flow chart.



Schedule for Reviewing Master Facility Table (updated October 14, 2016)			
June 2016	July 2016	August 2016	September 2016
Alabama ✓ Tri County, CO ✓ Marion, IN ✓ Michigan ✓ Tennessee ✓ Virginia ✓ Washington ✓ Wisconsin ✓ Department of Defense ✓ Veterans Affairs ✓	Illinois ✓ Massachusetts ✓ Kentucky ✓ Arizona ✓ Mississippi ✓ Arkansas ✓ West Virginia ✓ Kansas ✓ Houston, TX ✓	Nevada ✓ Utah ✓ New Mexico ✓ Denver PH ✓ Riverside, CA ✓ Idaho ✓ North Dakota ✓ Montana ✓ Alaska ✓	Stanislaus, CA ✓ Linn County, IA ✓ Santa Clara, CA* ✓ Nevada, CA ✓ Florida ✓ Ohio ✓ Pennsylvania ✓ New York ✓ North Carolina ✓
September 2016	October 2016	November 2016	
Georgia ✓ New York City ✓ New Jersey ✓ Indiana* ✓ Tarrant County, TX ✓ Missouri ✓ Louisiana ✓ Maryland ✓	Oklahoma* ✓ Minnesota ✓ Connecticut* ✓ South Carolina* ✓ Oregon ✓ Maine ✓ Nebraska ✓ New Hampshire ✓	County of Sacramento, CA ✓ District of Columbia ✓ Delaware ✓ San Diego, CA* ✓ Vermont ✓ South Dakota* ✓ San Mateo, CA ✓ El Dorado, CA ✓	

*site-requested deferred transition

GRANTEE AND PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

Oregon Uses ESSENCE Report Manager to Inform and Educate Public Health

Viewing and analyzing ESSENCE data gives epidemiologists a host of timely situational snapshots, right? Well, creative staff at the Oregon Health Authority had an additional thought: Let's not only monitor ESSENCE data, let's use our findings to define the timing and content of health education messages for the general public.

Oregon's report not only educates its professional public health audience (including people new to syndromic surveillance), the report appeals to practitioners who routinely interpret statistical findings—striking a balance that's difficult to accomplish in a single report.

For anyone unfamiliar with the ESSENCE Report Manager, this feature enables system users like Oregon to create MS Word documents that use any format, logos, and text layouts they want in a report and upload those into the system. A user can then specify a time range for ESSENCE to generate predefined graphs and maps that will be inserted automatically into the MS Word document to download.

Using summertime as a recent example, Oregon monitored several seasonal hazards that increase the need for medical care: insects, poisonous plants, recreational activities around water, and elevated temperatures and dry conditions. Oregon used the left-hand sidebar to define terms and links to supplemental information, such as public health messaging. Oregon used the body of the report for graphs (query results) and explanations of syndromes, queries, and findings that would appeal to the sentiments of public health experts. Headings are as straightforward as "What are You Seeing?" and



