

NHSN Agreement to Participate and Consent
New Purpose Statement for Data Provision in an Outbreak Investigation
As of 1/19/2017

NHSN purpose statement

Provide to state, local, or territorial health departments facility-level information to facilitate HAI prevention efforts (e.g., identifying facilities to target for prevention activities), and provide patient- and healthcare facility-level data to state, local, or territorial health departments during an outbreak investigation to assist their case-finding or outbreak control. This does not replace the requirement for facilities to adhere to state, local, and territorial public health reporting requirements including reporting outbreaks to public health authorities where mandated.

Questions

1. Q: What information will or can be made available to state/local health departments during outbreaks?

A: Health departments that are investigating a possible outbreak can request information from NHSN. More information on the criteria needed to receive this information can be found in question two. Once the NHSN re-consent process is confirmed to be completed, CDC can provide patient-level and facility-level data to assist in the response. Data requests from components other than Patient Safety will be considered on a case by case basis.

Data from the Patient Safety Component that can be shared include:

- Names of facilities within their jurisdiction with similar organisms or clusters (e.g., case finding)
- Baseline rates for problem of interest within the jurisdiction
- Standardized infection ratios (SIR) for other HAIs at the outbreak facility (currently limited to C. difficile, CLABSI and CAUTI)
- Requests for other data will be considered on a case by case basis

Please keep in mind:

- Requests for NHSN data outside of the health department's jurisdiction will require consultation with CDC and the other health department(s) before data can be shared due to privacy requirements CDC must adhere
- Delays in reporting to NHSN (up to 6 months) limit the utility of NHSN for case finding
- CDC encourages health departments to use the NHSN data and tools that are already accessible to them via [data use agreement \(DUA\)](#), state or local reporting mandate, and/or voluntary NHSN group; CDC can provide consultation to assist with these analyses

2. Q: What does a health department need to do to receive this information?

A: In order to access NHSN information health departments should:

1. Contact HAOutbreak@cdc.gov to communicate details of the situation/investigation and provide an outline of the information requested
2. Demonstrate that the information is being requested in support of an acute active public health response (i.e., outbreak)
3. Indicate how the information will provide actionable information that will assist in the response
4. Describe any relevant NHSN data access that is currently available via DUA, state or local reporting mandate, and/or voluntary NHSN group

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CDC will review the request to determine if it meets the criteria specified above. If the criteria are met, CDC will provide the information and/or assist the health department to use the NHSN data and tools that are available to them.

Health departments are reminded of the need for facilities to adhere to state, local, and territorial public health requirements including applicable mandates for reporting outbreaks.

3. Q: Do states or local health departments, regardless of NHSN access (legislatively mandated HAI events, DUA or states/LHDs without legislation or DUA), have access to this information?

A: Yes, in support of an outbreak investigation, CDC can provide this information to requesting health departments regardless of their NHSN access.

4. Q: If an antibiotic resistant organism is reported into NHSN, will the state/local HD be notified?

A: CDC does not regularly currently review NHSN for any AR phenotype and will not notify health departments of reports of unusual AR phenotype. If a facility enters an event in NHSN with an unusual pathogen-drug combination, NHSN will generate an unusual susceptibility profile (USP) alert on the facility's homepage. The alert encourages the facility to review the data for errors, contact the laboratory to confirm results if data entry is correct, and report to the local or state health department if applicable. If a health department has an NHSN group, it has the ability to run a report to view which facilities have generated USP alerts and whether or not those facilities have confirmed the alerts.

5. Q: Does or will NHSN have capacity to identify increased incidence of unusual events.

A: NHSN does not currently regularly review data to identify increased incidence of reported HAIs or unusual events or organisms. Dialysis Event data in NHSN are reviewed to identify clusters of bloodstream infections. In the future, health departments might be notified about such events. Thresholds and notification procedures are still under discussion.

6. Q: How do state/LHDs request access when they suspect or are aware of a cluster/outbreak?

A: Health departments requesting information from NHSN during a response should notify HAOutbreak@cdc.gov. They should include details of the investigation, the information being requested, and information about the how this information will be used. In addition, the health department should describe any relevant NHSN data access that is currently available via a mandate or DUA.