Notifiable Disease Surveillance

Health officials monitor diseases and conditions that can cause serious illness or a significant public health concern. States send data on these notifiable diseases or conditions to CDC. Since 1879, health officials have monitored diseases such as cholera and smallpox. Today, public health tracks infectious diseases like Zika, foodborne outbreaks such as *E. coli*, and noninfectious conditions such as lead poisoning.

“The whole goal of what we do in public health is to make these nonissues. We don’t want to have an outbreak.”

— Sarah Park, MD
State Epidemiologist and Chief of the Disease Outbreak Control Division, state of Hawaii

Why It Matters

Local health officials compile information from healthcare providers, laboratories, and other reports. Local and state health departments use the data to identify and control disease outbreaks. They ensure people are effectively tested, treated, and provided with the care they need to stay healthy.

States submit data to CDC, where the information is used to guide public health policy and prevention strategies that keep people healthy and defend America from health threats.

Notifiable disease data are critical to:

- Detect disease when and where it happens
- Stop disease before it spreads
- Study disease to strengthen the science
- Improve how we prevent and control disease
- Keep people healthy
The National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) relies on the monitoring and disease control activities performed by local and state public health departments across the country. A modernization initiative is making it faster and easier for state health departments to send data to CDC, and CDC is improving how it delivers these data to our disease programs.

Developing a more flexible, adaptive, and timely data system for notifiable diseases is an important part of CDC’s strategic approach to surveillance.

**Newer**
Modernized systems will make it possible for public health to use one data standard to exchange disease monitoring data.

**Faster**
CDC and public health will be able to understand disease trends and emerging health events more quickly.

**Smarter**
Data that the health department receives from multiple sources, such as the clinic and the laboratory, can be delivered to CDC in one message.

**Better**
Richer, more complete data drive public health action.

**Putting Data to Work: Numbers Tell the Story**

- **More than 120** notifiable diseases and conditions under surveillance
- **3,000** local health departments to state & territorial health departments
- **Nearly 2.7 million** disease events reported through the NNDSS each year
- **100%** of the American population protected

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