

Texas Syndromic Surveillance FAQ

What is Syndromic Surveillance? Syndromic Surveillance allows for early detection of abnormal health trends and can provide situational context for further public health investigations. Early insight into these patterns can help to reduce their impact on community health across Texas.

How does syndromic surveillance work?



Who is eligible to participate?

Hospitals with emergency departments, free-standing emergency centers, and urgent care centers are eligible to submit data.

What type of agreement is required?

Data providers and Local Health Departments (LHDs) must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Individual users must sign a User Access Agreement and the Health and Human Services Acceptable Use Agreement.

How much does it cost?

Participation is free! The only cost is for the information technology personnel required to make and manage the connection.

How does viewing data work?

Data can be viewed in our ESSENCE (Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics) platform. Facilities can view data from within their facility system. LHDs can view data from within their Public Health Region. DSHS staff can view statewide data. All users can view aggregate data.

Is the data in TxS2 confidential?

Yes, data in TxS2 is secure, confidential, and classified as Protected Health Information (PHI). DSHS stores all data in secure databases accessed only by authorized users.

Syndromic Data in Action

- Respiratory Illness Surveillance
- Extreme Weather Events
- Opioid Workshops
- Vaping Surveillance
- Firearm injury or near drowning prevention efforts

What are the technical specifications for TxS2?

DSHS configured TxS2 to support the [Public Health Information Network \(PHIN\) Messaging Guide](#) for Syndromic Surveillance.

How does data get into TxS2? How often is it updated?

The data stream is between a facility's Electronic Health Record (EHR) and the TxS2 system. The EHR automatically captures and sends the data to TxS2. The expectation is to have facilities submit data at least once every 24 hours.

How is TxS2 beneficial for data providers?

TxS2 facilitates data interoperability between facilities and health departments. Facilities are eligible for the Federal Promoting Interoperability Program.

How is TxS2 beneficial for public health officials?

Public health officials can use the system for early event detection, situational awareness, and querying the data for syndromes of interest.

How many facilities submit data to TxS2?

There are more than 300 facilities submitting data to TxS2, with more added each month.

What data is available in TxS2?

Data Source:

- Hospital Emergency Department (ED) datasets*
- Mortality
- Poison Control
- Air Quality
- Weather Station

*User Access based on PHR jurisdiction

How is this related to the Tarrant County system or the Houston Health Department system?

The two systems feed their data into TxS2. Facilities located in PHR 2/3 should submit to Tarrant. Similarly, facilities located in PHR 6/5S should submit to Houston.