



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

**Texas Department of State
Health Services**

Texas Syndromic Surveillance (TxS2)

Procedure

Collaboration with PHR 2/3, Tarrant County Public Health, PHR 6/5S, and Houston Health Department

Version 3

April 5, 2019

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Section 1. Purpose

This procedure defines the collaboration between DSHS central office, DSHS Public Health Region 2/3, DSHS Public Health Region 6/5S, Tarrant County Public Health, and Houston Health Department in syndromic surveillance activities in Texas. Activities including collecting and sharing data and the responsibilities with regards to the statewide syndromic surveillance system are included.

Section 2. Background

Texas Syndromic Surveillance (TxS2) is a statewide syndromic surveillance system built and maintained by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) for use by Local Health Departments (LHDs), DSHS Public Health Regions (PHRs), DSHS central office, and hospitals for enhanced surveillance of emerging public health conditions or threats. Syndromic surveillance utilizes trend analysis to establish a baseline and then uses algorithms to compare the current data to that baseline and issue alerts when aberrations are detected.

The TxS2 technical infrastructure consists of production and test environments. The TxS2 configuration consists of Data Providers (for example hospitals) using secure protocols to share individual level data through the Health Services Gateway. Rhapsody[®] software is used for data ingestion and Texas Data Center Services (DCS) is used for data hosting. Data is stored in a secure database and accessed by Users (LHDs, DSHS PHRs, DSHS central office, and hospitals) through the analysis software called ESSENCE (Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics), developed by the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory.

Section 3. Collaboration Overview

TxS2 is the statewide syndromic surveillance system for Texas. This system is capable of integrating data from other syndromic surveillance systems, including the system operated by Tarrant County Public Health for hospitals located in PHR 2/3 and the system operated by Houston Health Department for hospitals located in PHR 6/5S. TxS2 will also submit data to the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) operated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

DSHS is collaborating with Tarrant County Public Health and Houston Health Department in building the statewide system. Data Providers located in PHR 2/3 that are connected to the Tarrant County Public Health system will continue to submit data to this system and the data will be sent to TxS2. Likewise, Data Providers located in PHR 6/5S connected to the Houston Health Department system will continue to submit data to this system and the data will be sent to TxS2. DSHS will work with Data Providers outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S to connect them directly to the TxS2 system. If there are Data Providers located in PHR 2/3 or PHR 6/5S that prefer to connect directly to TxS2, DSHS will accommodate those requests.

Once the system is established and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are executed, users statewide will have access to the data and the ability to view alerts and run data queries. Hospitals and hospital systems will have the ability to view data within the hospital/hospital system and aggregate PHR and statewide data. LHDs will have the ability to view data within the PHR and aggregate PHR and statewide data. DSHS will have the ability to view statewide data.

Section 4. Responsibilities

All collaborators will:

- A. Collectively organize a discussion group for topics related to the implementation of TxS2.
- B. Share information on facilities intending to submit syndromic surveillance data to ensure they are connected via the correct pathway.
- C. Provide the Master Facility Table to CDC that represents their system.
- D. Comply with active engagement requirements under the Meaningful Use incentive program.

DSHS will:

- A. Develop and maintain the TxS2 system in an environment secured in accordance with Texas Health and Human Services standards.
- B. Develop and enforce rules, policies, and procedures for TxS2, as needed.
- C. Provide an MOU to Data Providers located outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S (as well as other Data Providers statewide that prefer to connect directly to TxS2) that will allow for sharing the Limited Data Set and access the TxS2 system.
- D. Provide an MOU to Local Health Departments that will allow for access to the TxS2 system.
- E. Provide an MOU to data aggregators, Tarrant County Public Health and Houston Health Department, that will allow for sharing the Limited Data Set on behalf of the Data Providers connected to their regional system and access the TxS2 system.
- F. Provide an MOU to Data Providers in PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S (System Users) that will allow for access to the Limited Data Set.
- G. Transmit data from TxS2 to NSSP.
- H. Manage User access to TxS2.
- I. Manage NSSP access for users located outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S.
- J. Use information collected from TxS2 stakeholders to provide an overall view of the system and how it is used statewide.

Public Health Regions 2/3 and 6/5S will:

- A. Coordinate efforts to establish and maintain the Syndromic Surveillance Regional Advisory Committee (SSRAC) for their respective region as is done in all other PHRs.
- B. Collaborate with LHDs and Data Providers within their PHR to provide examples of how the data is being used at the regional and local level for education, data sharing, and documenting the successes of syndromic surveillance.

Tarrant County Public Health and Houston Health Department will:

- A. Maintain their respective regional syndromic surveillance systems in a secure environment.
- B. Transmit data from their respective systems to TxS2.
- C. Transmit data from their respective systems to NSSP.
- D. Manage User access to their respective systems.
- E. Manage NSSP access for users in their respective regions.
- F. Establish regional consortiums with a focus on data sharing and collaborative response utilizing healthcare and public health information systems.
- G. Provide DSHS with information from their region on the facilities submitting data and local health departments accessing data in order to obtain a statewide view of TxS2 usage. Such information should include their Master Facility Table, data quality and completeness reports, and examples of how the data is being used at the regional and local level for education, data sharing, and documenting the successes of syndromic surveillance.

Section 5. Points of Contact

Name	Role	Phone	Email
TxS2 Team	TxS2 General Inquires	(512) 776-7770	syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov
TxS2 Support	TxS2 Technical Support	(512) 776-7770	TxS2Support@dshs.texas.gov
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Talmage Holmes	Tarrant County Public Health	(817) 321-5365	tholmes@tarrantcounty.com
Kiley Mann	PHR 6/5S Primary Contact	(713) 767-3232	kiley.mann@dshs.texas.gov
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Section 6. Revision History

Date	Version	Action	Section
8/1/17	1	New procedure	
11/1/17	2	Minor edits	All
4/5/19	3	Minor Edits	Section 5