Texas Syndromic Surveillance FAQ

What is Syndromic Surveillance? Syndromic Surveillance is surveillance that allows for early detection of abnormal disease patterns. These disease patterns could result in high morbidity and mortality using near real-time data.

How does syndromic surveillance work?

Event ▶ Symptoms ▶ ER ▶ Patient Reports Symptoms ▶ Chief Complaint ▶ ESSENCE

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 submitters and Local Health Departments (LHDs) must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Individual users must sign a User Access 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?
Hospitals can view data from within their hospital. 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

- Infectious disease outbreaks (flu, Zika, Norovirus)
- Mass gatherings (Super Bowl)
- Disasters (Harvey)
- Injuries (drug overdoses, falls)
- Chronic illnesses (Asthma)

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 EHR automatically captures and sends the data to TxS2. The expectation is to have hospitals submit data at least once every 24 hours.

How is TxS2 beneficial for data providers?
TxS2 is beneficial for the early detection of abnormal disease patterns within the facility and uses a proprietary algorithm that allows for statewide comparisons.

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 hospitals submit data to TxS2?
There are more than 250 hospitals submitting data to TxS2, with more added each month.

What data is available in TxS2?
Currently, hospital emergency department (ED) data is the only data source. There are plans to add Poison and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) data by the end of 2019. DSHS will consider other data sources in the future.

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.