

Department of State Health Services Syndromic Surveillance Governance Council Charter

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I. Authority

The Associate Commissioner of the Division for Regional and Local Health Operations (RLHO) (Associate Commissioner), Department of State Health Services (DSHS), established the Syndromic Surveillance Governance Council (Governance Council) as an advisory council to DSHS regarding syndromic surveillance operations in the State of Texas.

II. Duration and Termination

- A. **Effective Date.** This Charter of the Governance Council will be effective when signed by the Associate Commissioner after due consideration and comment by Governance Council members.
- B. **Termination.** This Charter will terminate two years after the date of the first meeting of the Governance Council conducted pursuant to this Charter (Charter Term).
- C. **Amendments.** The Associate Commissioner may amend this Governance Council Charter during the Charter Term as the Associate Commissioner deems necessary to accomplish the purpose of the Governance Council. The Governance Council shall be promptly notified of any amendment of this Charter and given the opportunity to vote on the amendment prior to it becoming effective.

III. Purpose, Objectives, and Scope of Activities

- A. The Governance Council will provide guidance and subject matter expertise, with feedback from the Syndromic Surveillance Regional Advisory Committees (SSRACs) and the DSHS Syndromic Surveillance team, to the Associate Commissioner regarding the operations of syndromic surveillance within the State of Texas. DSHS has the final decision-making authority for the Texas Syndromic Surveillance system.
- B. The Governance Council shall fill the gap between healthcare provider organizations such as hospitals and urgent care settings, Local Health Departments and Public Health Regions, and state level authorities. It will provide a forum for dialogue and the exchange of ideas and experiences regarding considerations forwarded to the Governance Council by the SSRACs and other matters as raised by Governance Council members.
- C. The Governance Council shall advise generally on DSHS' syndromic surveillance data collection, sharing, and operational activities and other topics assigned to it by the Associate Commissioner. To carry out the Governance Council's purpose, the scope of its activities shall include providing information, analysis, and recommendations to DSHS. The output of Governance Council meetings should serve to better inform DSHS in policy development, rulemaking, and engagement functions regarding syndromic surveillance.
- D. The Governance Council shall provide input to DSHS on the development of rules for the Texas Syndromic Surveillance (TxS2) system.

IV. Members

Qualifications. The Associate Commissioner shall appoint the members of the Governance Council by assembling experts in syndromic surveillance, healthcare, public health, epidemiology, and information technology. Appointed membership will be determined through a standardized application process (See Appendix).

A. Categories. The Governance Council membership will consist of the following:

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|--|---|
| 1. Associate Commissioner | 1 |
| 2. DSHS State Epidemiologist | 1 |
| 3. HHS/DSHS Information Technology | 1 |
| 4. DSHS Health Emergency Preparedness and Response | 1 |
| 5. Houston Health Department | 1 |
| 6. Tarrant County Public Health | 1 |

In addition, appointed membership will include, at a minimum, representatives from the following specialty areas:

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|---|---|
| 7. Small Local Health Department (population < 50,000) | 1 |
| 8. Medium Local Health Department (population 50,000 – 250,000) | 1 |
| 9. Large Local Health Department (population > 250,000) | 1 |
| 10. DSHS Public Health Region | 1 |
| 11. DSHS Infectious Disease Prevention | 1 |
| 12. Data Providers | 3 |
| 13. School of Public Health | 1 |

B. Term. Appointed members will serve a three-year term. Membership terms will be staggered so that one-third of the membership expires each year on December 31, using the following rotations:

1. Medium Local Health Department, DSHS Public Health Region, and Data Provider 1
2. Large Local Health Department, DSHS Infectious Disease Prevention, and Data Provider 2
3. Small Local Health Department, School of Public Health, and Data Provider 3

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Medium Local Health Department	Large Local Health Department	Small Local Health Department
DSHS Public Health Region	DSHS Infectious Disease Prevention	School of Public Health
Data Provider 1	Data Provider 2	Data Provider 3

Requests for applications for expiring terms will be posted by September 1 every year with membership selected to begin their term January 1. If a vacancy occurs on the council, a person will be appointed to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term using the same application process as the original appointment.

- C. Resignations. Any member may resign at any time by giving notice to the Associate Commissioner. Any such resignation shall take effect upon its acceptance by the Associate Commissioner. The Associate Commissioner shall have the authority to remove Governance Council members and to appoint persons to fill vacancies on the Governance Council for the unexpired term. Members that fail to participate in three consecutive meetings shall be considered for removal from the Governance Council.
- D. Compensation. Members of the Governance Council shall serve without compensation for time, equipment, or supplies.

V. Meetings

- A. Frequency. The Governance Council shall meet quarterly (January, April, July, and October, unless otherwise determined) either in person or telephonically. The January meeting will be designated to take place in person on the main campus of DSHS, with the option to participate by telephone or other means satisfactory to Council members, as necessary.
- B. Agenda. Each meeting shall be conducted in accordance with an agenda formulated by DSHS.
- C. Attendance. Attendance must include a majority (51%) of Governance Council members for voting to occur. Meetings for information sharing may occur with less than a majority present. The Governance Council may call on individuals and guest speakers who are not members of the Governance Council or DSHS for the purpose of providing specific domain expertise and knowledge.
- D. Minutes. Minutes will be made public following each meeting.

VI. Voting

- A. All decisions made by the Governance Council will be made in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order. In order for voting to occur, 51% of the Governance Council total membership must be present, representing a quorum. Motions being voted on will pass based upon a simple majority (51%) of the quorum present.
- B. The Chair of the Governance Council will only vote in the event of a tie.

VII. Record of Activities

DSHS will provide minutes following each meeting of the Governance Council. These minutes will be publicly posted on the Syndromic Surveillance Governance Council website after approval by the Governance Council.

The Governance Council Charter will also be publicly posted on the Syndromic Surveillance Governance Council website after approval by the Governance Council.

David W. Gruber, Associate Commissioner
Division for Regional and Local Health Operations

Appendix: Application Process

1. The Associate Commissioner sends notification that applications are being accepted for a Governance Council position. For example, chief executives at hospitals are contacted if there is a data provider position open. The notification includes a deadline to indicate interest.
2. An application review panel consisting of three to four DSHS reviewers is established.
3. Individuals that indicate interest in serving on the Governance Council are provided with the DSHS Application for Advisory Committee Membership and a deadline to submit the completed application.
4. Applications are reviewed and scored by the review panel using the DSHS Advisory Committee Application Review scoring tool.
5. The review panel meets to discuss candidate qualifications and determine a nomination for the position.
6. The Associate Commissioner reviews the nomination for final approval.
7. Selection and Non-Selection letters are sent by the Associate Commissioner.