



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

Texas Syndromic Surveillance (TxS2) Regional and Local Health Operations

Procedure

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

**Version 5
October 10, 2024**

#54-15327

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Section 1. Purpose

This procedure defines the collaboration between DSHS central office, DSHS Public Health Regions 2/3 and 6/5S, Tarrant County Public Health, and Houston Health Department for Texas syndromic surveillance activities for the emergency room visits data source. Activities include collecting and sharing data. Responsibilities about the statewide syndromic surveillance system are addressed.

Section 2. Background

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

The TxS2 technical infrastructure has production and test environments. The TxS2 configuration includes 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). The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory developed ESSENCE.

Section 3. Collaboration Overview

This system integrates data from other syndromic surveillance systems, including the systems operated by Tarrant County Public Health and Houston Health Department, located in PHRs 2/3 and 6/5S respectively. TxS2 also submits emergency room visit data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) operated National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP). Tarrant County Public Health and Houston Health Department transmit data from their respective systems to NSSP.

DSHS collaborates with Tarrant County Public Health and Houston Health Department in operating the statewide system. Data Providers located in PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S submit data to their respective local systems, which is then sent to TxS2. DSHS connects Data Providers outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S 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 accommodates those requests.

Users statewide have access to the data, can view alerts, and run data queries. Hospitals and hospital systems can view data within the hospital/hospital system and

aggregate statewide data. LHDs can view data within the PHR and aggregate statewide data. DSHS can view statewide data.

Section 4. Responsibilities

All collaborators:

- A. Collectively organize discussions related to TxS2 implementation.
- B. Share information on facilities intending to submit data to ensure they are connected via the correct pathway.
- C. Provide a Master Facility Table to the CDC that represents their system.
- D. Comply with active engagement requirements under the Promoting Interoperability program.

DSHS:

- A. Maintains and enhances the TxS2 system in a secure environment per Texas Health and Human Services standards.
- B. Develops and enforces rules, policies, and procedures for TxS2, as needed.
- C. Provides an MOU to Data Providers located outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S. DSHS also provides MOUs to other Data Providers statewide that prefer to connect directly to TxS2. The MOU allows sharing the Limited Data Set and access the TxS2 system.
- D. Provides an MOU to Local Health Departments that allows TxS2 system access.
- E. Provides an MOU to Tarrant County Public Health and Houston Health Department, which allows sharing the Limited Data Set on behalf of the Data Providers connected to their regional system and access the TxS2 system.
- F. Provides an MOU to Data Providers in PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S (System Users) that allows access to the Limited Data Set.
- G. Transmits emergency room visits data from TxS2 to NSSP.
- H. Manages user access to TxS2.
- I. Manages NSSP access for users located outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S.
- J. Uses 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:

- A. Maintain the Syndromic Surveillance Regional Advisory Committee (SSRAC) for their respective region. All PHRs maintain SSRACs for their respective regions.
- 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. Uses include education, data sharing, and documenting the successes of syndromic surveillance.

Tarrant County Public Health and Houston Health Department:

- 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 focused on data sharing and collaborative response using 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 to obtain a statewide view of TxS2 usage. Such information should include:
 - a. Master Facility Table,
 - b. Data quality and completeness reports, and
 - c. 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 Inquiries	(512) 776-7770	syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov
TxS2 Support	TxS2 Technical Support	(512) 776-7770	TxS2Support@dshs.texas.gov
Steven Pulvino	PHR 2/3 Primary Contact	(817) 264-4890	steven.pulvino@dshs.texas.gov
Jenna White	Tarrant County Public Health	(682) 312-3109 x4083	jkwhite@tarrantcountytexas.gov
Kiley Mann	PHR 6/5S Primary Contact	(713) 767-3343	kiley.mann@dshs.texas.gov
Imran Shaikh Trent Nguyen	Houston Health Department	(832) 393-4724 (832) 395-8274	Imran.shaikh@houstontx.gov Trent.nguyen@houstontx.gov

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
3/5/20	4	Minor edits, accessibility, and readability fixes	All
6/14/24	5	Minor edits	Sections 3 & 5
10/10/24	6	Minor edits	Sections 5