

Why You Should Participate in HHS (Health and Human Services) Regional Epi Groups

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Objective

Within the BioSense Platform, users have the ability to view HHS Region level data that can provide insight into what may be happening around the country. Epidemiologists can examine this information for changes in trends of subsyndromes or other potential issues of public health concern and compare it to their local data. However, the insight that regional data can provide is limited without better understanding of what is happening in the jurisdictions that make up the region. This round table will discuss the benefits of engaging with other jurisdictions within regions and attempt to define rules of engagement that can be used to facilitate interactions.

Introduction

One of the early successes for the National Syndromic Surveillance Program's (NSSP's) BioSense Platform was community agreement on what should make up national and regional picture of the data. For NSSP to meet program objectives, National level surveillance and situational awareness had to be made available – not just to CDC, but to the entire community. To make this possible, the community had to agree on a limited dataset that would be sufficient to produce national and regional picture. Currently when NSSP staff at CDC or a particular program review HHS Regional data, they can only see trends at high levels. Although, this information is proving useful, when very unusual data spikes occur there is insufficient information to determine its public health significance. CDC would like to set up HHS Regional Epi groups made up of syndromic surveillance practitioners within regions in order to communicate about potentially unusual findings and discuss implications for local jurisdictions.

Keywords

NSSP; HHS Regional Epidemiology Groups; National Surveillance; Regional Surveillance

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