
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that timely reporting of
2 data is critical to the ability of public health officials to
3 detect and respond to health threats and disease trends.
4 Syndromic surveillance is the analysis of health-related data
5 from events that affect health status and outcomes for public
6 health purposes, such as early detection of disease outbreaks.
7 Syndromic surveillance provides automated, near real-time
8 collection and transmission of data, including, but not limited
9 to, chief complaint, discharge diagnosis, visit dates, patient
10 demographics, patient zip code, and facility location.
11 Syndromic surveillance data is de-identified, meaning that
12 patient names, addresses, and other data elements that could
13 identify an individual are not transmitted.
14 The value of syndromic surveillance has been demonstrated
15 in Hawaii during responses to wildfires, volcanic eruptions,
16 drinking water contamination, and communicable disease
17 outbreaks. Syndromic surveillance in these events prompted
18 real-time clinical guidance and targeted health interventions,

H.B. NO. 2312

1 informed resource allocation decisions, and guided public
2 messaging.

3 The legislature also finds that the use of syndromic
4 surveillance data, currently collected through the National
5 Syndromic Surveillance Program, can enable the department of
6 health and other state agencies to better monitor, act on, and
7 understand a wide range of public health concerns, including
8 communicable disease, chronic disease, disaster and terrorism
9 response, climate and weather-related illness and injury, gun
10 violence, suicidal ideation, and drug use and overdose.

11 At present, the department of health can access and analyze
12 data collected by the National Syndromic Surveillance Program.

13 However, data is submitted to that program on a voluntary basis,
14 and the department of health does not have the authority to
15 require participation or determine how data is submitted.

16 Additionally, Hawaii's dependence on the National Syndromic
17 Surveillance Program, which is federally funded and
18 administered, leaves the State vulnerable to changes in federal
19 data collection priorities. Further, the National Syndromic
20 Surveillance Program offers minimal flexibility and does not
21 always meet the needs of the State to the extent necessary for
22 adequate public health management. The department of health is

H.B. NO. 2312

1 unable to customize analyses of data from the National Syndromic
2 Surveillance Program to Hawaii's population and public health
3 concerns, including health disparities. Because participation
4 in the National Syndromic Surveillance Program is voluntary,
5 there are geographical "data deserts" in rural areas where the
6 department of health has an incomplete understanding of public
7 health concerns.

8 The legislature further finds that the department of
9 health's recently updated electronic disease surveillance system
10 can support a local syndromic surveillance system that does not
11 rely on a federal data system and is more customizable, allowing
12 for integration with other department of health systems and more
13 efficient collaboration with other state agencies.

14 The legislature finds that it is critical that the
15 department of health retain and strengthen its ability to
16 collect and use syndromic surveillance data independent of
17 federal systems to ensure the department can rapidly detect and
18 respond to public health threats.

19 Accordingly, the purposes of this Act are to authorize the
20 department of health to require the reporting of syndromic
21 surveillance data, regulate how syndromic surveillance data is
22 collected, and allow the department of health to create and

H.B. NO. 2312

1 operate a local syndromic surveillance system, as needed,
2 independent of federal systems.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and
5 to read as follows:

6 "PART . SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE

7 **§321-** **Syndromic surveillance data collection;**
8 **authorized.** (a) Hospitals with emergency departments that are
9 licensed in the State shall report syndromic surveillance data
10 to the department of health in a manner and format specified by
11 the department of health on its website. Information required
12 to be reported includes data regarding:

- 13 (1) Infectious or communicable disease;
- 14 (2) Noninfectious causes of acute or chronic illness;
- 15 (3) Intentional or accidental use or misuse of chemical,
16 biological, radiological, or nuclear agents;
- 17 (4) Adverse environmental events or natural disasters,
18 including but not limited to hurricanes, floods, and
19 fires; or
- 20 (5) Any other emerging threat or condition affecting
21 public health.

H.B. NO. 2312

5 (c) The department of health may require by rules pursuant
6 to chapter 91 additional entities, including, but not limited
7 to, urgent care facilities, emergency medical service providers,
8 other healthcare facilities, and poison control centers to
9 submit syndromic surveillance data.

10 (d) For purposes of this part, "syndromic surveillance
11 data" means de-identified data that signals a sufficient
12 probability of a case, an outbreak of disease, or other event
13 that may warrant a public health response, including but not
14 limited to:

- 15 (1) Chief complaint;
- 16 (2) Discharge diagnosis;
- 17 (3) Visit dates;
- 18 (4) Patient demographics;
- 19 (5) Patient ZIP code; and
- 20 (6) Facility location.

21 **§321- Confidentiality.** Syndromic surveillance data is
22 confidential and may only be shared or redislosed pursuant to

H.B. NO. 2312

1 state and federal privacy regulations or for research purposes
2 that have been approved by the department of health's
3 institutional review committee; provided that the department of
4 health may publicly release aggregated statistical data that
5 does not allow identification of individuals.

6 **§321- Rules.** The director of health may adopt rules
7 pursuant to chapter 91 necessary to carry out the purposes of
8 this part."

9 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Naomi K. Vlahos

12

BY REQUEST

JAN 26 2026

H.B. NO. 2312

Report Title:

DOH; Syndromic Surveillance Data

Description:

Requires hospitals with emergency departments that are licensed in Hawaii to submit syndromic surveillance data to the Department of Health. Authorizes the Department of Health, as needed, to establish by administrative rules a syndromic surveillance system under state jurisdiction that is independent of federal systems.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Health

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE.

PURPOSE: To require reporting of data from certain healthcare providers to the Department for purposes of syndromic surveillance and authorize the Department to create a local syndromic surveillance system.

MEANS: Add a new part to chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

JUSTIFICATION: Syndromic surveillance data provides public health entities with necessary information to monitor health threats in a timely manner. By tracking symptoms of patients in emergency departments and other settings, in near real-time, public health agencies can detect and respond to health threats and disease trends.

The Department currently conducts syndromic surveillance through the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP), which is a federal system that collects syndromic surveillance data from various sources. However, the data received from NSSP is limited, as participation is voluntary and does not always adequately meet the State's needs.

Requiring reporting from healthcare facilities to the Department will allow the State to obtain necessary syndromic surveillance data that is currently unavailable and, if necessary, expand its own syndromic surveillance capacity.

This bill is needed to require the reporting of syndromic surveillance data from hospitals with emergency departments, and from other entities when needed, to ensure Hawaii's ability to rapidly detect and respond to public health threats.

H.B. No. 2312

Impact on the public: The public will benefit from additional public health protective capabilities if the Department is better able to predict and respond to certain emerging health issues in the community at large. Hospitals subject to this requirement may require modification to their IT systems.

Impact on the department and other agencies: This bill will expand the breadth and diversity of syndromic surveillance data collection across the state by requiring participation from certain types of healthcare facilities. Hawaii Health Systems Corporation will be impacted because it operates emergency departments, which must report data pursuant to the bill. Other entities may be required to report if the Department adopts rules.

GENERAL FUND: None.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM
DESIGNATION: HTH 131.

OTHER AFFECTED
AGENCIES: Hawaii Health Systems Corporation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon approval.