
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 the State during responses to wildfires, volcanic eruptions,
16 drinking water contamination, and communicable disease
17 outbreaks. Syndromic surveillance in these events prompted



1 real-time clinical guidance and targeted health interventions,
2 informed resource allocation decisions, and guided public
3 messaging.

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

12 At present, the department of health can access and analyze
13 data collected by the National Syndromic Surveillance Program.
14 However, data is submitted to that program on a voluntary basis
15 and the department of health does not have the authority to
16 require participation or determine how data is submitted.
17 Additionally, the State's dependence on the National Syndromic
18 Surveillance Program, which is federally funded and
19 administered, leaves the State vulnerable to changes in federal
20 data collection priorities. Furthermore, the National Syndromic
21 Surveillance Program offers minimal flexibility and does not



1 always meet the needs of the State to the extent necessary for
2 adequate public health management. The department of health is
3 unable to customize analyses of data from the National Syndromic
4 Surveillance Program to the State's population and public health
5 concerns, including health disparities. Because participation
6 in the National Syndromic Surveillance Program is voluntary,
7 there are geographical "data deserts" in rural areas where the
8 department of health has an incomplete understanding of public
9 health concerns.

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

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

21 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is:



- 1 (1) To authorize the department of health to require the
- 2 reporting of syndromic surveillance data;
- 3 (2) Regulate how syndromic surveillance data is collected;
- 4 and
- 5 (3) Allow the department of health to create and operate a
- 6 local syndromic surveillance system, as needed,
- 7 independent of federal systems.

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

11 **"PART . SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE**

12 **§321- Definitions.** As used in this part:

13 "Department" means the department of health.

14 "Syndromic surveillance data" means de-identified data that
 15 signals a sufficient probability of a case, an outbreak of
 16 disease, or other event that may warrant a public health
 17 response, including but not limited to:

- 18 (1) Chief complaint;
- 19 (2) Discharge diagnosis;
- 20 (3) Visit dates;
- 21 (4) Patient demographics;



1 (5) Patient zip code; and

2 (6) Facility location.

3 **§321- Syndromic surveillance data collection;**

4 **authorized.** (a) All hospitals with emergency departments that
5 are licensed in the State shall report syndromic surveillance
6 data to the department in a manner and format specified by the
7 department on its website. Information required to be reported
8 includes data regarding:

9 (1) Infectious or communicable disease;

10 (2) Noninfectious causes of acute or chronic illness;

11 (3) Intentional or accidental use or misuse of chemical,
12 biological, radiological, or nuclear agents;

13 (4) Adverse environmental events or natural disasters,
14 including but not limited to hurricanes, floods, and
15 fires; or

16 (5) Any other emerging threat or condition affecting
17 public health.

18 (b) The department may establish by rules adopted pursuant
19 to chapter 91 a state syndromic surveillance data reporting
20 system to collect, maintain, and analyze syndromic surveillance
21 data.



1 (c) The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
2 to require additional entities, including but not limited to
3 urgent care facilities, emergency medical service providers,
4 other health care facilities, and poison control centers to
5 submit syndromic surveillance data.

6 **§321- Confidentiality.** Syndromic surveillance data
7 shall be confidential and shall only be shared or redisclosed
8 pursuant to state and federal laws, regulations, and rules
9 governing health information privacy and security or for
10 research purposes that have been approved by the department's
11 institutional review board; provided that the department may
12 publicly release aggregated statistical data that does not allow
13 identification of individuals.

14 **§321- Rules.** The director of health may adopt rules
15 pursuant to chapter 91 necessary to carry out the purposes of
16 this part."

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



Report Title:

DOH; Syndromic Surveillance Data

Description:

Requires hospitals with emergency departments that are licensed in the State to submit syndromic surveillance data to the Department of Health. Authorizes the Department of Health to establish a state syndromic surveillance system. (HD1)

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