
National Syndromic Surveillance Program- Community of Practice Community Charter

Prepared by the International Society for Disease Surveillance

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Version Control Log

Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
10/26/16	0.5	First Draft	EL
10/28/16	1.0	Version revised and approved by NSSP-CoP Steering Committee Members	EL and SC Members
4/26/17	2.0	Version revised and approved by NSSP-CoP Steering Committee Members	SC Members

Preamble

The purpose of this document is to describe and define the National Syndromic Surveillance Program Community of Practice (NSSP-CoP), why it exists, how it operates and what it means to be a member. The document has been created collaboratively by the partners, members and stakeholders. Representatives from these groups include:

NSSP-CoP Steering Committee Members at the time of approval of the current version

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Stakeholders

National Syndromic Surveillance Practitioners
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)
International Society for Disease Surveillance (ISDS)

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I. Introduction

A. Purpose of the Nssp-CoP Community Charter

The National Syndromic Surveillance Program – Community of Practice (Nssp-CoP) community charter documents information required by decision makers to approve and support the activities necessary for a successful cultivation and sustainability of the Community of Practice. The community charter includes the needs, scope, justification, and resource commitments. The intended audience of the community charter is the stakeholders, Nssp-CoP Steering Committee, and the community members.

B. Community Overview

The Nssp promotes and advances development of a Syndromic Surveillance (SyS) system for the timely exchange of syndromic data. These data are used to improve nationwide situational awareness and enhance responsiveness to hazardous events and disease outbreaks to protect America's health, safety, and security. The Nssp includes the secure, cloud-based BioSense Platform for the receipt, storage and management of SyS data from local and state health departments. The Nssp functions through collaboration among individuals and organizations at local, state, and federal levels of public health; federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; public health partner organizations; and hospitals and health professionals.

The National Syndromic Surveillance Program Community of Practice (Nssp-CoP) membership includes CDC-funded grantees, non-funded states and jurisdictions that contribute data to the BioSense Platform, public health practitioners who use local syndromic surveillance systems, CDC programs, other federal agencies, partner organizations, hospitals, healthcare professionals, and academic institutions to advance the science and practice of syndromic surveillance. While BioSense addresses SyS technology, the Nssp-CoP is the social framework for public health workers on the front lines of public health surveillance and emergency preparedness.

II. Mission

The Nssp-CoP serves the needs and interests of the SyS community through leveraging the expertise and resources of its members; and strengthens health surveillance capabilities nationwide by advancing SyS practice and the utilization of SyS platforms (including the Nssp BioSense Platform).

III. Vision

The Nssp-CoP has an overarching goal to harness the energy and expertise of individuals in the SyS community to better serve their professional development, organizational capabilities in surveillance, and the health of the American population.

Short-term outcomes will focus on building a strong Nssp-CoP among a geographically distributed target population, measured by informal, formal, and virtual engagement; assessment of perceived value in activities; ongoing mapping of the SyS landscape; access to a comprehensive resource repository; sharing of success stories; and public and private community spaces that promote member interaction, recognition, recruitment, and retention.

Mid-term outcomes include a more collaborative network; greater understanding of the utility of SyS; increased application of SyS systems and knowledge; additions to the evidence-base for SyS practice; enhanced use of the BioSense Platform; cross-jurisdictional data sharing; curation of the resource repository; and collaborations in response to routine and emerging public health threats.

Long-term outcomes will include community level improvements in the use of timely, accurate, representative, and automated data to inform public health decision-making; advocating for the SyS community with national stakeholders; the sharing of best practices; and fostering a collaborative environment among community members.

IV. Goals

The approach utilized by the NSSP-CoP for addressing a broad, complex, **strategic** issue such as **increasing the quality, utility, and availability of syndromic surveillance data** requires skilled facilitation of the community. The defined approach relies on providing opportunities for members to learn from one another, collaborate on common issues/challenges, and keep members informed of local, regional, national and international initiatives and emerging trends in the practice community.

The intent of the NSSP-CoP is to support open and dynamic participation of any individual or organization working on/or interested in increasing the quality, utility, and availability of syndromic surveillance data. The activities of the community are based on an analysis of issues and learning needs identified through surveys, synthesis of information from stakeholders, funders and partners, and conversations with the members. Key to this approach in facilitating a community is to have routine communication with the members. This involves assessing members' integration efforts, understanding what the issues and challenges are and translating this information into opportunities for knowledge creation and knowledge transfer.

The goals of the NSSP-CoP include the following:

1. Increasing the availability of SyS training, learning and knowledge-sharing events for SyS community members, strengthening the confidence and trust among community members in the utility of SyS data, and increasing the sharing of SyS data among community members (where appropriate and state/local laws allow).
2. Implementing a process for requesting peer-to-peer and expert-to-apprentice mentoring and sharing of success stories/best practices.
3. Identifying gaps and barriers to knowledge sharing and increasing the quality, utility and availability of syndromic surveillance data, developing strategies, products and activities designed to mitigate or to address the identified obstacles.
4. Disseminating materials, products and practices that are developed by the community to the broader audiences of public health, clinical providers, and other interested parties.

V. NSSP-CoP Steering Committee

An established governance and organizational structure for the NSSP-CoP will set a foundation for strategic action and ensure feasibility and alignment of NSSP-CoP activities with stakeholder priorities. The NSSP-CoP Steering Committee (SC) will work to ensure that the NSSP-CoP effectively promotes the use and practice of syndromic surveillance, enables a peer-to-peer collaborative environment to foster and facilitate knowledge sharing and partnership, and enhances the nation's syndromic surveillance capacity. Committee members will leverage their expertise to provide direction and recommendations for projects that benefit community engagement and collaboration across all sectors of the CoP.

A. Steering Committee Member Responsibilities:

- Participate in monthly 90-minute conference calls.
- Participate in workgroups and other activities as needed.
- Provide recommendations and priorities for community-driven activities.
- Identify projects that will facilitate improved collaboration, data sharing, methods development and technical innovation in syndromic surveillance.

- Actively engage with members of the SyS community.
- Commit to spending 2-3 hours each week to Steering Committee business.

B. Selection of Nssp-CoP Steering Committee Members:

Nssp-CoP members nominate candidates for appointment to the Steering Committee, who then get reviewed by a nomination committee who reviews and selects a final slate of candidates based on eligibility, qualifications, and a desire for a SC that represents the full breadth of membership. Permanent resignations created for any reason will be filled by selection of an interim member that will serve a full two-year term starting the first day of the month just following their appointment to the committee. Interim members will be solicited using the following process: 1) a nomination announcement will be shared with the Community of Practice to solicit self- and colleague-generated nominations; 2) the Nssp-CoP Steering Committee will review and approve nominations that meet the nomination criteria; 3) a nomination committee will vote on the final list of nominees.

C. Nssp-CoP Steering Committee Chair:

To facilitate aspects of Nssp-CoP Steering Committee function, a chair shall be elected. The term of the Chair shall be one year, followed by one year as Past-Chair. The Past Chair shall serve as a backup when the chair is unable to participate for any period. Permanent resignation of the Chair (or Past-Chair) created for any reason will be filled by a vote for an interim Chair (or Past-Chair) that will serve the remainder of the departing Chair's (or Past-Chair's) term.

The Chair will be elected – by secret ballot of the SC – with the Chair-elect having achieved a plurality of votes. In the case of a tie between two members, a second vote will be held until one receives a plurality. Upon completion of a Chair's term, the SC will hold elections for a new Chair.

The Chair (or past-chair, in the chair's absence) will be responsible for facilitating discussions among the SC members and determining which issues require a vote (according to the voting mechanism outlined below). If an issue is to be considered by the SC, documents outlining the issue will be drafted (facilitated by ISDS) and supplied to the SC for comment, revision, and, votes for approval, if warranted. ISDS will be responsible for facilitating SC meetings, documenting discussions, recording attendance and votes. The Chair may also be asked to represent the SC at additional meetings of SyS partners.

D. Terms of Service for Nssp Steering Committee Members:

Nssp-CoP Steering Committee members will serve a term of two years starting the first day of the month just following their appointment to the committee.

E. Nssp-CoP Steering Committee Voting Mechanism:

The Nssp-CoP Steering Committee will include both voting and non-voting members.

Any Steering Committee member may decide that an issue be voted upon. In the absence of such a decision, the chair (or past-chair, in the chair's absence) will decide which issues require a vote. In order to assure a voting member of the SC receives sufficient informed input from those they represent, any issues for which a vote is required shall be presented to the SC at least two weeks in advance of any scheduled vote.

A vote may only conclude when at least 75 (seventy-five) percent of the SC have participated, voting for, against, or abstaining. Voting will occur during meetings if feasible; in votes during meetings, all members in the meeting must be allowed to vote. Asynchronous voting outside of meetings, such as by email, may be used if necessary. When voting outside of meetings is used, the method will always provide an option for any member to require that the vote be postponed until there is more discussion. During voting outside of meetings, a single vote for postponement will result in the voting being abandoned, and the issue going back to discussion.

Sufficient time will be given to discuss each issue scheduled for a vote prior to the vote itself. The vote itself will be an open- ballot vote. A record of each vote (with each member's vote listed) will be presented in notes from the SC meeting.

Passage of an issue shall require a majority of votes (not counting abstentions) in the affirmative. However, the goal shall always be to strive for consensus.

F. NSSP-CoP Steering Committee Interaction with the BioSense Governance Group:

The NSSP CoP Steering Committee will have an interactive role with the BioSense Governance Group (BGG), providing the forum to connect with users of the BioSense Platform. Both the SC and the BGG are pivotal in the success of syndromic surveillance, where the SC will work with the community to focus on the use of data and syndromic surveillance practice, the BGG will work with the community to focus on the direction and support for the BioSense Platform. Where there are opportunities presented, these two groups will engage in collaborative partnerships, facilitate dialogue and outreach for enhancements, and further activities that will foster the growth of the syndromic surveillance.

Additional guidelines for this interaction will be determined in partnership with the BGG.

VI. Partnership with ISDS

ISDS has been recognized as a cornerstone for syndromic surveillance practitioners and collaborators working to develop and implement SyS practice. ISDS will apply more than a decade of experience administering and building collaborations among public health agencies and partners to support the goals of the NSSP-CoP through the NSSP-CoP: Strengthening Health Surveillance Capabilities Nationwide Cooperative Agreement (NSSP-CoP CoAg) with CDC. ISDS will work in collaboration with the NSSP-CoP SC and CDC to formalize, cultivate, manage, and maintain the NSSP-CoP to strengthen health surveillance capabilities nationwide by advancing SyS practice and the utilization of the NSSP BioSense platform.

Key Tasks to be completed under the NSSP-CoP CoAg include:

1. Establish governance structures for a more formalized NSSP-CoP and assist in the facilitation of the NSSP-CoP Steering Committee.
2. Establish an NSSP-CoP online presence that provides collaboration tools capable of supporting a variety of community activities and events including a searchable knowledge repository of SyS resources, tools, reports, discussions, white papers, best practices, etc.
3. Develop and deliver synchronous and asynchronous SyS related trainings, technical assistance, peer-to-peer mentoring, and knowledge sharing events based on identified needs of members.
4. Determine the NSSP-CoP member's knowledge needs and gaps on an ongoing basis by assessing members' satisfaction with and value perceived from participation in the NSSP-CoP and its activities.
5. Develop a sustainability plan for the NSSP-CoP.

VII. Membership with the NSSP-CoP

Membership is open to any SyS professional or organization with a public service focus working on/or interested in the goals of the NSSP-CoP. Participation in the NSSP-CoP online community requires registration with the NSSP-CoP.

NSSP-CoP Members are encouraged to:

- be involved with the ultimate goal of improving SyS practice.
- to demonstrate a commitment to advancing the practice and adoption of SyS.

- participate regularly in workgroups, site visits, and other community activities and contribute to product development to the fullest extent possible -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- attempt to build on each member's strengths, and help each other improve areas in need of further development.
- be willing to share challenges, best practices, and lessons learned as well as success stories.
- distribute leadership responsibilities and collectively share in the management of the community.
- commit to search for opportunities for consensus or compromise and for creative solutions.
- strive to create an environment of trust and to foster insightful, non-threatening discussion of ideas and experiences.
- agree to be respectful and use appropriate language in group discussions and to listen and respond to each other with open and constructive minds.
- provide such documentation as required by ISDS for evaluation purposes and to document progress in the agencies integration efforts on a periodic basis.

VIII. Changes to the Nssp-CoP Charter

Changes to this charter document shall be proposed to the Nssp-CoP Steering Committee by providing the written amendments for the SC to consider. After sufficient time for discussion and debate, the SC shall vote on the written amendments.

Participation of all SC members, or appointed substitutes, shall be required for a vote on charter amendments to proceed.

Passage of an amendment shall require a vote of the majority of the membership of the SC in the affirmative.

Changes to the charter will be reflected in a new draft of this document, with a recording of the date of revision. An archive will be kept of all official previous versions of this charter.

Signature of acknowledgement of the NSSP-CoP Charter as developed by the NSSP-CoP Steering Committee on April 21, 2017.

The signature on this page by the Chair of the NSSP-CoP Steering Committee represents that this document meets with the approval of the entirety of the Committee. It also represents the understanding of the signatories that this is a “living document” which can be periodically modified and improved upon by the NSSP-CoP Steering Committee, based upon input by stakeholders, following terms described within this document.

To be signed by the Chair of the NSSP-CoP Steering Committee

Rosa J Ergas

Name



Signature

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Organization

Syndromic Surveillance Coordinator

Title

April 26, 2017

Date