



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™



Public Health Surveillance and Data

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Why does it matter?

DMI Basics: The Why, What, and How of Data Modernization

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The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored our need for data that moves faster than disease.

- DMI will give us the ability to tap into more sources of data and to move quickly to put the pieces together on new and emerging threats, as well as to handle the complexity of the available data in a way that leads to timelier and more accurate public health decisions.

We need state, local, and federal public health to have rapid access to actionable data.

- Data drives decisions in public health, and especially at CDC.
 - New sources and types of data suggest the possibility of having a 360-degree view of almost any public health challenge.
 - The potential for insights that put science into action, save lives, eliminate disease, and end epidemics is there, and that's the reality we're trying to get to.
- The data public health provides are critical not only to respond to [COVID-19](#), but for finding and fixing the full spectrum of health challenges our nation faces.
 - For example, a recent report showed that the rate of murders has increased; opioids still plague our nation; mental health has been impacted dramatically by the pandemic; and health equity remains a public health crisis and a priority for CDC.
 - Public health data needs to be stronger if we are going to defeat COVID and be ready for what's next.
- However, years of under-investment in our data have led to many places in America that remain underserved by public health.
 - We are at a critical turning point— an “all hands-on deck” moment when we must transform how we collect, use, and share data at CDC and beyond.
 - To respond, CDC is navigating the challenges of COVID-19 data and surveillance while at the same time improving the nation's posture for the next public health emergency.

For the first time, DMI is providing a unified foundation for public health data modernization that is both resourced and comprehensive.

- This unity is essential and is creating unprecedented connection between CDC, its [partners](#), [policymakers](#), and the public.

Effective public health means equitable public health. Data can help us get there.

“The federal government should be the source of truth for the public to get clear, accessible, and scientifically accurate information about COVID-19.”


— *National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness, January 2021*

With the Data Modernization Initiative, we are making public health data work better for America. Accurate, instantaneous data can help us pinpoint diseases from the start and direct resources where they matter most.

Data are not the end, but the means to begin answering important questions that impact our lives, livelihoods, and communities.

CDC’s mission is to give all people the information they need for decision-making and wellbeing. In emergencies and every day, we need data we can use to address health inequalities and give everyone the opportunity to attain the highest possible level of health. The Data Modernization Initiative is working to make important data – such as race and ethnicity data – more complete, so we can find and fix [health inequality](#) wherever it exists.

RESOURCES

- [Harnessing the Power of Data to Save Lives](#)  – This fact sheet shows the risks we face, the actions we are taking, and how we are currently putting data to work to protect America’s health.
- [Modernizing for New and Complex Threats](#) – This fact sheet shows why we need a totally integrated, high-speed health data system to keep us safe from the diseases and outbreaks of today and the new and complex health threats of tomorrow.

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