# Table of Contents

**Event Overview** ..................................................................................................................... 2

**Session Types** ..................................................................................................................... 2

**Daily Agendas** ................................................................................................................... 3

- Day 1 – Tuesday, December 5, 2023 ......................................................................................... 3
- Day 2 – Wednesday, December 6, 2023 .................................................................................. 7
- Day 3 – Thursday, December 7, 2023 .................................................................................... 12
Event Overview

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP), virtually convened the 2023 Syndromic Surveillance Symposium from December 5-7, 2023. The event was held during the following dates and times:

- Tuesday, December 5, 2023: 12:45 – 5:00pm EST
- Wednesday, December 6, 2023: 12:45 – 5:00pm EST
- Thursday, December 7, 2023: 12:45 – 3:30pm EST

CSTE partnered with Kahuina Consulting to provide an engaging and interactive virtual forum for the syndromic surveillance community to exchange experiences, share best practices, and take away innovative solutions and strategies for advancing syndromic surveillance practice. Attendees had opportunities to learn new skills from technical experts, from the basics to the latest analytical techniques. There was also a forum to discuss the future of the NSSP Community of Practice and increasing syndromic surveillance capacity at the state, local, territorial, tribal and national levels. There were opportunities to connect with colleagues informally throughout the symposium through virtual networking sessions.

Session Types

**Virtual Networking:** Optional short, informal opportunities during session breaks to meet new colleagues and discuss specific topics.

**Breakout:** Moderated presentations from several speakers addressing similar topics or themes with a short question and answer period.

**Roundtable:** Facilitated discussion around a central topic with audience participation and dialogue.

**Training:** Sessions focused on teaching new techniques, methods, and topics to attendees.
Daily Agendas

Day 1 – Tuesday, December 5, 2023

WELCOMING REMARKS AND OPENING PLENARY

12:45 PM EST  Daily Open, Logistics, and Overview

Charlie Ishikawa, MSPH
Kahuina Consulting, LLC
Founder & Principal Consultant

1:00 PM EST  Welcoming Remarks

Recording

Speakers:
- Janet Hamilton, MPH – CSTE, Executive Director
- Kathleen Hartnett, PhD, MPH – CDC, Integrated Monitoring Branch Chief
- Jennifer Layden, MD, PhD – CDC, Director of the Office of Public Health Data, Surveillance, and Technology
- Gabriel Haas, MPH – Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Epidemiologist

1:30 PM EST  Opening Plenary Discussion: Data to Action

Recording

Moderator: Charlie Ishikawa, MSPH – Kahuina Consulting, LLC

Description: How can we articulate the value of syndromic surveillance in human terms? During this plenary session, we will delve into the relationships that benefit from our work. Four colleagues from different jurisdictions will share stories about the value of syndromic surveillance during large, integrated public health responses and explore how past experiences can help us make more of syndromic surveillance. There will be time for audience questions and discussion.

Speakers:
- Andrew Farrey, MPH – Kentucky Injury Prevention Research Center
- Vanessa Whattam, MPH – Montana Office of Epidemiology and Scientific Support
- Levi Schlosser, MPH – North Dakota Department of Health
- Lakshmi Radhakrishnan, MPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
2:45 PM EST  **Roundtable: From Detection to Action: Public Health Stories from Syndromic Surveillance Data**

*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.*

**Description:** What interesting syndromic surveillance developments are undocumented due to the routine nature of the practice? This roundtable discussion provides a forum for practitioners to share unique examples from their work that might otherwise be undocumented. Examples may include a time syndromic surveillance was used to provide unique situational awareness on an emerging event, a case investigation initiated by syndromic surveillance data that resulted in ruling out a public health event, unique trends noted and investigated during routine surveillance, or situations of interest that were captured in emergency department data. Bring a syndromic story to share and learn from your fellow syndromic surveillance practitioners.

**Facilitators:**
- Caleb Wiedeman, MPH – Tennessee Department of Health
- Anna Frick, MPH – Alaska Department of Health

2:45 PM EST  **Training: NSSP ESSENCE 101**

**Recording**

**Description:** How can new syndromic surveillance users build their skills and effectively use ESSENCE? This training session will serve as an orientation for novice ESSENCE users to demonstrate how to perform routine tasks, such as developing queries, analyzing data using multiple visualization types, creating data tables with the table builder, and utilizing alerting algorithms. Join us for a live, step-by-step demonstration of ESSENCE showing users how to navigate the tool, create and run a query, and perform time-series visualizations.

**Trainers:**
- Dylan Johns, MS – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program, ICF International
- Katharina van Santen, MPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program, ICF International
- Travis Lim, MS, MPH, DrPH – Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory
2:45 PM EST  **Roundtable: Using Pedestrian Injury Syndromic Surveillance Data for Public Health Action**

*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.*

**Description:** How can federal, state, and local partners collaborate to prevent pedestrian injuries and provide safe spaces for physical activity and active transportation? This roundtable will focus discussion on how syndromic surveillance data on traffic-related pedestrian injuries can inform monitoring and prevention efforts. Join this session to learn how timely data on pedestrian injury emergency department visits can help rapidly monitor trends, identify disparities, and evaluate prevention strategies.

**Facilitators:**
- Miriam E. Van Dyke – Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, National Center for Chronic Disease and Health Promotion, CDC
- Vaughn Barry – Division of Injury Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC

**VIRTUAL NETWORKING [OPTIONAL SESSION STARTING AT 3:45PM EST]**

3:45 PM EST  **Coffee Break: Meet the Subcommittees!**

**Description:** Join this networking break to connect with folks from the CoP Subcommittees! Hear about their work and engage in friendly icebreakers, swap syndromic stories, and exchange information for future collaboration and connection.

---

**10 MINUTE BREAK STARTING AT 4:05PM EST**

---

**BLOCK 2 [SESSIONS STARTING AT 4:15PM EST]**

4:15 PM EST  **Training: From Prompt to Practice: How ChatGPT Enhances Public Health Surveillance Execution Recording**

**Description:** How can practitioners leverage ChatGPT to create ESSENCE syntax and enhance public health surveillance? This training session seeks to furnish epidemiologists, public health researchers, and related professionals with a nuanced, holistic understanding of the underpinnings of large language mode (LLM) functionalities and their transformative implications for public health surveillance. Join this session to learn tested methods for LLM-driven
prompt engineering for harnessing ChatGPT’s expansive and diverse application, resulting in elevated research quality and outcomes.

Trainers:
- Jeremy Funk, MPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program, InductiveHealth
- Andzelika Rzucidlo, MPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program, InductiveHealth

4:15 PM EST  Roundtable: Refining and Implementing Syndromic Surveillance Definitions for Wildfire Smoke Inhalation
*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.

Description: How can syndrome definitions for wildfire smoke inhalation be re-examined and implemented more widely as wildfires continue to be a public health threat? This roundtable discussion assesses current wildfire and smoke inhalation definitions in use, needs and barriers to use, and strategies for refining and implementation. Join this session to learn more about this public health threat that affected every HHS region in 2023.

Presenters:
- Cristin McArdle, PhD, MPH – National Center for Environmental Health, Centers for Disease Control
- Jared Wagner, MPH – Hawaii State Department of Health
- Heather Aydin-Ghormoz, MS, MPA – New York State Department of Health
- Charlene Weng, MS – New York State Department of Health
- Katharina van Santen, MSPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program, ICF International

4:15 PM EST  Breakout: Strengthening Syndromic: Enhanced and Improved Syndromic Surveillance Use Cases

Description: How can syndromic surveillance provide more timely and useful insights to health systems? Presenters will describe three syndromic surveillance applications and explore different ways to leverage syndromic surveillance to detect outbreaks sooner and provide more complete pictures of disease burden. Join this session to learn how syndromic data can be improved and become even more useful to your organization and partners.

Moderator: Kathleen Rees, MSPH – Washington County Health and Human Services

Presenters:
- Meredith Davis, MPH – Virginia Department of Health
- Jessica Pavlick, PhD – Georgia Department of Public Health
- Anastasia Stepanov, MPH – North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services
Day 2 – Wednesday, December 6, 2023

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

12:45 PM EST  Daily Open, Logistics, and Overview

Charlie Ishikawa, MSPH
Kahuina Consulting, LLC
Founder & Principal Consultant

1:00 PM EST  Community Plenary Discussion: The Value of Syndromic Surveillance

Recording

Moderator: Charlie Ishikawa, MSPH – Kahuina Consulting, LLC

Description: How can we nurture syndromic surveillance value within our organizations? As syndromic surveillance data is increasingly used for broader public health purposes, practitioners are often left wondering how to demonstrate its value to others. During this plenary session, we will open a conversation about the NSSP Community of Practice and communities of practice within our own organizations. Join us for an interactive session with an opportunity for breakout discussions among Symposium participants.

Speakers:
- Gabriel Haas, MPH – Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- Rosa Ergas, MPH – Massachusetts Department of Public Health

BLOCK 1 [SESSIONS STARTING AT 1:30PM EST]

1:30 PM EST  Roundtable: Another Record Year: Monitoring Syndromic Surveillance Data for Heat-Related Illness

*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.

Description: What is the role of syndromic surveillance in the growing climate crisis? Syndromic surveillance data is key in monitoring heat-related illness and providing timely insights to partners. Join this session to learn how practitioners are turning up the heat on heat and health surveillance and harnessing syndromic surveillance data to share actionable insights.

Presenters:
- Abigail (Abby) Gates, MSPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program
- Emily Prezzato, MPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National
Center for Environmental Health
- Ambarish (Rish) Vaidyanathan, PhD – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health
- Lauren Prinzing, MPH – Vermont Department of Health
- Rachel Berg, BS – Arizona Department of Health Services

1:30 PM EST  Breakout: EmergenSEE: Ways to Deepen Our Understanding of Communities Through Data  
**Recording**

**Description:** How can we use our surveillance systems as lenses to better understand communities? Knowing the demographic characteristics and distribution across catchment areas provides important context for interpreting syndromic surveillance data. Join this breakout to explore two applications of syndromic surveillance data that illuminate the impact of social determinants of health on emergency department visits and care delivery.

**Moderator:** Diksha Ramnani, MPH – County of Monterey Health Department

**Presenters:**
- Michelle Wemette, DVM, MPH – Metro Public Health Department of Nashville/Davidson County
- Amy Ising, Phd – University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

1:30 PM EST  Breakout: Gaining Track-tion: Methods to Monitor Syndromic Surveillance Trends for Situational Awareness  
**Recording**

**Description:** How hot is too hot for our local communities? As extreme temperature events become expected seasonal occurrences, communities must monitor the new normal and quickly respond to higher temperatures. Join this session to see how jurisdictions keep cool under pressure by sharing heat-related illness visualizations and dashboards for public health action and community awareness.

**Moderator:** Nimi Idaikkadar, MPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Presenters:**
- Lauren Norris, MHS – Washington State Department of Health
- Laura Fox, MPH – Arizona Department of Health Services
- Niki Lajevardi-Khosh, MPH – Arizona Department of Health Services
- Devin Metoyer, MPH – Louisiana Office of Public Health

15 MINUTE BREAK STARTING AT 2:30PM EST
**BLOCK 2 [SESSIONS STARTING AT 2:45PM EST]**

**2:45 PM EST** Roundtable: Integration of Emergency Department and Laboratory Data for Respiratory Disease Surveillance

*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.*

**Description:** How can we effectively use emergency department and laboratory data to monitor respiratory disease surveillance? After the COVID-19 emergency response, there is heightened interest and need to track respiratory illness across the country. Join this interactive conversation to learn about integrating available data sources in ESSENCE and examining respiratory disease trends.

**Presenters:**
- Katharina van Santen, MSPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program, ICF International
- Jennifer Lenahan, MPH – Public Health - Seattle and King County
- Kelley Bemis, MPH – Cook County Department of Public Health
- Stephanie Dietz, PhD – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program

**2:45 PM EST** Breakout: New Frontiers: Leveraging Technology to Advance Syndromic Surveillance Practice

**Recording**

**Description:** The machines are learning! And more quickly finding needles in the haystack of data and with higher fidelity. Join this session to learn about advanced analytic methods that can help analysts apply ICD-10 codes to literal cause of death descriptions and identify emergency department anomalies before we know to look for them.

**Moderator:** Anna Frick, MPH – Alaska Department of Health

**Presenters:**
- Joshua Kimrey, PhD – Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory
- Jennifer Sleeman, PhD – Computer Science, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory
- Alejandro F. Castro III, MPH – New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

**2:45 PM EST** Roundtable: Using Syndromic Surveillance to Supplement Local Animal Bite Reporting

*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.*

**Description:** How does syndromic surveillance data support reportable disease surveillance? Data systems present strengths and limitations that impact
our ability to create meaning from the data. Join this practical roundtable discussion to hear about strategies to use syndromic surveillance data as a supplemental data source for traditional case investigation through the lens of animal bites and rabies exposure surveillance.

Presenters:
- Evonne Koo, MPH, MS – County of Monterey Health Department

**Collaborative Conversations [Optional Session Starting at 3:45pm EST]**

3:45 PM EST  **Collaborative Conversations: Advanced Methods and Processes for Report Generation, Scenario Detection, and New Data Source Integration**  
*Recordings*

**Description:** Scenario detection, data integration, and report generation, oh my! New data sources, methods, and processes are continually employed to efficiently analyze and share findings. Join this interactive session to chat with presenters and hear how they are harnessing advanced methods and processes in their syndromic practice.

**Block 3 [Sessions Starting at 4:15pm EST]**

4:15 PM EST  **Roundtable: Utility and Value of Urgent Care Syndromic Surveillance Data**  
*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.*

**Description:** How does urgent care data add value to our syndromic surveillance insights and practice? Data from urgent care facilities offer the potential to cover a broader geographic region and more diverse care settings, while also presenting their own unique data quality considerations. Join us to continue the discussion about the benefits and practical considerations of onboarding urgent care facilities to syndromic surveillance systems.

Presenters:
- Deen Gu, MHA – North Carolina Department of Public Health

*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.*

**Description:** How did syndromic surveillance contribute to our successes during the COVID-19 pandemic? For many public health professionals, the pandemic will be the most significant event they will be involved in during their careers. It also highlighted the need for near real-time, high-quality data during public health emergencies. Join this action-oriented roundtable to hear how our collective COVID-19 experiences can guide preparedness and response for the future.
Presenters:
- David Atrubin, MPH – Florida Department of Health
- Caleb Wiedeman, MPH – Tennessee Department of Health


Description: What can syndromic surveillance tell us about the health impact of our environment? Environmental changes, especially air quality, can exacerbate health conditions like asthma. Syndromic surveillance provides early indications of the health impact of wildfire smoke and air pollution. Join this session to learn how these jurisdictions air out their analyses to inform the community and take action.

Moderator: William Smith, MS – Maricopa County Department of Public Health

Presenters:
- Vanessa Whattam, MS – Montana Department of Public and Human Services
- Sherri Hong, MPH, BS – Harris County Public Health
- Ramona Lall, PhD – New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

NETWORKING

5:15 PM EST  Symposium Socials!

Description: Let’s keep the fun times rolling! Join this informal session to jam out while making a playlist, challenge your creativity with a game of Scattegories, or get moving with a virtual scavenger hunt. We hope to see you there!
Day 3 – Thursday, December 7, 2023

LOGISTICS AND PREVIEW

12:45 PM EST  Daily Open, Logistics, and Overview

Charlie Ishikawa, MSPH
Kahuina Consulting, LLC
Founder & Principal Consultant

BLOCK 1 [SESSIONS STARTING AT 1:00PM EST]

1:00 PM EST  Breakout: Build a Bigger Table: Using Syndromic Surveillance Data to Improve Health Equity

Description: How can public health agencies incorporate health equity into their syndromic surveillance practices? This foundational session examines data quality considerations for syndromic surveillance practitioners, approaches to monitor outcomes by disability status and type, and actionable recommendations to apply health equity principles across the data lifecycle. Join this timely and important breakout session to explore strategies to build a bigger table with your organization, partners, and communities.

Moderator: Lakshmi Radhakrishnan, MPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program

Presenters:
- Rishi Kowalski, ScM – Cook County Department of Public Health
- Margaret Nilz, MPH – Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Rebecca Ruvane, MS – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program, Kahuina Consulting
- Sarah Scott, MSPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Syndromic Surveillance Program, Kahuina Consulting

1:00 PM EST  Breakout: Methods for Informed Action: Using Syndromic Surveillance to Inform Rabies Vaccination, Suicide Prevention, and MIS-C Surveillance

Description: How can public health agencies use syndromic data to detect and track health events and inform programmatic decisions? Dive into the details of three ways health departments leveraged syndromic surveillance to educate community members and providers on the availability of rabies vaccines, identify risk factors linked to increased risk of suicides and suicide attempts, and improve incidence estimates of multisystem inflammatory
syndrome in children. Join this engaging breakout session to explore ways your program can utilize syndromic data to improve the health and well-being of communities.

**Moderator:** Ellen Church, MPH – City of Somerville Health and Human Services  
**Presenters:**  
- Levi Schlosser, MPH – North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services  
- Lauren Gracy, MPH – Kansas Department of Health and Environment  
- Allison Longenberger, PhD, MPT – Pennsylvania Department of Health  
- Daphne Werz, MPH – Pennsylvania Department of Health  
- Kirsten Waller, MD, MPH – Pennsylvania Department of Health

### 1:00 PM EST Training: NSSP PRESS: A Collaborative Publication Platform to Revolutionize Reporting

**Recording**  
**Description:** How can practitioners use NSSP’s Publication & Reporting Enterprise for Syndromic Surveillance (PRESS) to build communities around centralized and interrelated content? Level up your collaboration by learning how to carry out specific searches, walking through ways to contextualize and connect files and authors, and previewing new features and enhancements. Join us for an innovative training aimed at enhancing your investigation and analyses through collaboration and report hosting.

**Trainers:**  
- Jamison Crawford, MPA – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ICF

### 1:00 PM EST Roundtable: Overdose Surveillance in Resource Limited Communities: How to Combat Barriers in Rural Counties Involving the Drug Overdose Epidemic

*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.*

**Description:** How can rural communities build partnerships and utilize data to prevent and reduce overdose deaths? This roundtable discussion will examine experiences and insights of organizations working in rural communities, best practices for building multisectoral collaborative partnerships, and strategies to increase data capacity. Join this session to connect with peers and examine ways to overcome the challenges of operating in rural settings.

**Speakers:**  
- Megan Dickson, BS, MPH – Metro Nashville Public Health Department

---

10 MINUTE BREAK STARTING AT 2:00PM EST
COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS [OPTIONAL SESSION STARTING AT 2:10PM EST]

2:10 PM EST  Collaborative Conversations: From Investigation to Communication: Maximizing the Use of Syndromic Surveillance Data for Public Health Response

Recordings

Description: How can we make the most of our syndromic surveillance insights for public health action? Sharing insights requires us to understand our syndromes, build effective queries, generate reports, and communicate findings. Join this interactive session for the opportunity to engage with presenters and hear about how they move from investigation and evaluation to communication and action for a variety of use cases.

VIRTUAL NETWORKING [OPTIONAL SESSIONS STARTING AT 2:40PM EST]

2:40 PM EST  Coffee Break: Meet your Neighbors!

Description: Join this networking break to connect with folks from your HHS region and engage in friendly icebreakers, swap syndromic stories, and exchange information for future collaboration and connection.

BLOCK 2 [SESSIONS STARTING AT 3:00PM EST]

3:00 PM EST  Roundtable: Local and Tribal Health Department Use of SyS and ESSENCE: Success Stories, Challenges, Ideas, Discussion

*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.

Description: How can local and Tribal health departments efficiently and effectively use syndromic surveillance data? This roundtable session offers a unique opportunity for local and Tribal health departments to connect, share success stories, and discuss shared problems and solutions. Join this session to examine strategies to use syndromic surveillance data in various types of local and Tribal settings.

Presenters:
- Ruth Koepke, MPH – Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Diksha Ramnani, MPH – Monterey County Health Department
- AZ Snyder, MSc – Pierce County Public Health Department
- Sarahjean Schluechtermann, MPH – Winnebago County Public Health

3:00 PM EST  Roundtable: Using Syndromic Surveillance to Monitor Health Outcomes in Vulnerable Populations

*Roundtable sessions were not recorded to encourage robust discussion and peer-to-peer engagement.
Description: In what ways can syndromic surveillance be used to monitor health conditions in vulnerable populations? Participants will define and identify vulnerable populations for different outcomes of public health interest and learn about existing resources and tools on how to address these disparities. Join this dynamic roundtable to gain insight into strategies for using syndromic surveillance to improve the health outcomes of vulnerable populations.

Presenters:
- Gabriel Haas, MPH – Kansas Department of Health and Environment

3:00 PM EST Breakout: Proxy Information: Using Established Data Elements to Track Information Lags, ICU Admissions, and Hospital Stress

Description: How can syndromic surveillance data fill gaps in hospital-related information? Learn about three notable applications of syndromic surveillance data to inform interpretation of hospital visit volume and percent of visit trends, assess hospital stress, and monitor hospital capacity. Join this sophisticated breakout session to explore strategies to maximize syndromic data when other hospital-related data are limited.

Moderator: Howard Burkhom, PhD – Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory

Presenters:
- Kelly Carey, MPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, InductiveHealth
- Mary Andel, MPH – Cook County Department of Public Health
- Stacey Hoferka, MPH, MSIS – Illinois Department of Public Health

CLOSING PLENARY

4:00 PM EST Closing Plenary: Fostering Relationships and Trust

Description: How can the syndromic surveillance community leverage new and existing relationships to harness and sustain momentum from the Symposium? Speakers from various levels of government will explore ways to foster relationships, build trust, and optimize communication to advance the use of syndromic surveillance data for public health action. Join us for an energizing and inspiring conversation as we close out this three-day event.

Speakers:
- Anna Frick, MPH – Alaska Department of Public Health
- Lowrie Ward, MPH – Alaska Native Epidemiology Center
- Diksha Ramnani, MPH – Monterey County Health Department
• Nimi Idaikkadar, PhD – National Center for Injury Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**SYMPOSIUM CLOSE**

5:00 PM EST  Closing Remarks  
[Recording]

Speakers:
• James Muncy, MPH – CSTE
• Anna Frick, MPH – Alaska Department of Health