

Alaska Native Epidemiology Center



Syndromic Surveillance Program

In Alaska, syndromic surveillance alerts hospital staff and the Alaska Department of Health and Human Services (AKDHSS) to potential disease outbreaks and unexpected levels of activity, including food poisoning, respiratory disease, drug overdoses. Additionally, it creates a way to monitor trends in homelessness, self-harm, substance use, and other behavioral health conditions.

Tribal Health Organizations (THOs) participating in syndromic surveillance gain access to their facility-level data, and also have the potential to contribute valuable information to the Tribal health system overall.

How does syndromic surveillance work in Alaska?

1. People seek treatment in a medical facility.
2. Secure data from the visit flows to Alaska's Health Information Exchange (HIE).
3. AKDHSS processes the data through the National Syndromic Surveillance Program's BioSense platform*
4. The medical facility uses the ESSENCE (Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community Based Epidemics) analytic platform to examine issues of concern.

Through training and technical assistance, the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center helps Tribal health partners in Alaska use syndromic surveillance to identify and respond to outbreaks and to inform operations and planning.

What is Syndromic Surveillance?

Syndromic surveillance is the near real-time monitoring of symptoms of concern in data from records of medical visits. An advantage over other surveillance methods, the syndromic surveillance system in Alaska can monitor unstructured free-text in the medical record in addition to coded diagnoses. The information is processed through powerful statistical software, allowing systems to alert the users to unusual activity that is impossible to track through diagnostic codes alone.

**The BioSense Platform "is a secure integrated electronic health information system that hosts standardized analytic tools and facilitates collaborative processes. The BioSense Platform is a product of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)".*

Alaska Native Epidemiology Center Core Functions

Information Sharing

Surveillance + Applied Studies

Technical Assistance + Training

Disease Prevention + Control

(907) 729-4567

| anepicenter@anthc.org

| anthc.org/epicenter