



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

Texas Syndromic Surveillance (TxS2)

Procedure

Data Provider and TxS2 User Registration and Onboarding

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Section 1. Purpose

This procedure defines the specific steps required for Data Providers (for example hospitals) and TxS2 Users (for example hospitals and local health departments) to gain access to the TxS2 system for both sharing electronic health data and accessing data within the system. For Data Providers, the procedure includes steps from registration of intent to submit data through production as well as gaining access to view data. For TxS2 Users, the steps to obtain access to view data are included.

Section 2. Background

Texas Syndromic Surveillance (TxS2) is a statewide syndromic surveillance system built and maintained by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) for use by Local Health Departments (LHDs), DSHS Public Health Regions (PHRs), DSHS central office, and hospitals for enhanced surveillance of emerging public health conditions or threats. Syndromic surveillance utilizes trend analysis to establish a baseline and then uses algorithms to compare the current data to that baseline and issue alerts when aberrations are detected.

The TxS2 technical infrastructure consists of production and test environments. The TxS2 configuration consists of Data Providers using secure protocols to share individual level data through the Health Services Gateway. Rhapsody® software is used for data ingestion and Texas Data Center Services (DCS) is used for data hosting. Data is stored in a secure database and accessed by Users (LHDs, DSHS PHRs, DSHS central office, and participating hospitals) via the Internet using the analysis software called ESSENCE (Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics), developed by the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory.

In 2019, data from the EMS Registry and Poison Control Database were added to TxS2. EMS data is only available to LHD and DSHS users, and the Poison Control data is only available in aggregate to users.

Section 3. Registration Procedures

Sharing electronic health data and accessing data within the TxS2 system requires a fully executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the entity, and two documents (the TxS2 User Access Agreement and the HHS Acceptable Use Agreement form) for individual Users within an entity.

Below are the specific steps for completing the registration procedure, based on the entity type and its location in Texas (see map of PHRs at <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/regions/state.shtm>). These steps are also summarized as checklists in Appendices A through D.

Data Providers (located outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S)

Data Providers located outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S need to sign the DSHS Data Provider MOU and are connected directly to the TxS2 system. Please follow the steps below to complete the registration process (see Appendix A for a checklist).

Data Providers that submitted data to the former TALHO system should follow the steps below. Connections were not automatically transferred off the former TALHO system. Facilities need to follow the steps outlined below and work with DSHS to set up connections to TxS2.

For Data Providers, the steps to register and proceed to production are broken into the following categories:

- Registration of Intent
- Onboarding and Testing (2 parts)
- Production

These categories align with Promoting Interoperability (formerly Meaningful Use) stages of active engagement:

- Completed registration of intent to submit data
- Engaged in onboarding and testing
- Submitting data regularly into the production environment

Registration of Intent

1. The Data Providers register their intent to submit data by completing emailing syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov and stating interest in connecting to TxS2.
2. The Data Provider completes the Contractor Vendor Information Form and emails the form to syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov. This form sets up your facility as a vendor with DSHS for the purpose of executing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for data sharing. If the Data Provider already has a vendor number, please include it on the form.
3. Procurement and Contracting Services sends the Data Provider MOU via DocuSign to the signatory and contact identified on the Contractor Vendor Information Form. Please ensure the email addresses for these two people are correct.

4. The Data Provider obtains the authorized signature and returns the signed MOU to Procurement and Contracting Services.
5. DSHS signs the MOU and the fully executed contract is sent to the Data Provider by Procurement and Contracting Services.
6. The Data Provider emails syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov with list of specific staff members within their organization that should have access to TxS2 for viewing data and alerts.
7. TxS2 Staff emails the forms to each individual identified.
8. The individual TxS2 User completes the forms and emails them to syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov.
9. DSHS assigns TxS2 User account and notifies the User of their account information and how to access the ESSENCE application.

Onboarding and Testing – Part 2

10. After receipt of a fully executed MOU, DSHS invites the facility to begin testing HL7 messages in preparation for onboarding to TxS2. DSHS Information Technology staff coordinate with Data Provider Information Technology staff to complete Data Provider onboarding and testing, including connection and content setup and verification. (See additional messaging details in the TxS2 Data Provider Onboarding and Messaging Procedure, located under Policies and Procedures on the TxS2 website.)

Production

11. Once all testing is completed, Data Provider submits data to the production environment on a daily basis.

Data Providers (located inside PHR 2/3 and 6/5S)

Data Providers located inside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S will connect to the Tarrant County Public Health system or Houston Health Department system, respectively. Their data will then be sent to the TxS2 system.

Data Providers located in PHR 2/3 that are connected to the Tarrant County Public Health system continue to submit data to this system and the data will be sent to TxS2 from Tarrant County Public Health. If your facility is located within PHR 2/3 and you would like to connect to this system, please contact phinformatics@tarrantcounty.com or (817) 321-5365.

Data Providers located in PHR 6/5S that are connected to the Houston Health Department system continue to submit data to this system and the data will be sent to TxS2 from the Houston Health Department. If your facility is located within PHR 6/5S and you would like to connect to this system, please contact Biru Yang at syndromic@houstontx.gov or (832) 393-4541.

Data Providers located in PHR 2/3 or PHR 6/5S that submitted data to the former TALHO system should transfer their connections. These connections were not automatically transferred off the former TALHO system. Facilities in PHR 2/3 need to work with Tarrant County Public Health to transfer their connections to the Tarrant County Public Health system. Facilities in PHR 6/5S need to work with Houston Health Department to transfer their connections to the Houston Health Department system.

In addition, Data Providers located in PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S that need access to view aggregate statewide syndromic surveillance data need to sign the DSHS System User MOU to gain access to the TxS2 system. Please follow the steps below to complete the registration process (see Appendix B for a checklist).

1. The Data Provider completes the Contractor Vendor Information Form and emails the form to syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov. Please indicate that your facility intends to submit data to either the Tarrant County Public Health system or Houston Health Department system and that you are requesting access to view statewide data. This form sets up your facility as a vendor with DSHS for the purpose of executing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for accessing data. If the Data Provider already has a vendor number, please include it on the form.
2. Procurement and Contracting Services sends the System User MOU via DocuSign to the signatory and contact identified on the Contractor

Vendor Information Form. Please ensure the email addresses for these two people are correct.

3. The Data Provider obtains the authorized signature and returns the signed MOU to Procurement and Contracting Services.
4. DSHS signs the MOU and the fully executed contract is sent to the Data Provider by Procurement and Contracting Services.
5. The Data Provider emails syndromic-surveillance@dshs.texas.gov with list of specific staff members within their organization that should have access to TxS2 for viewing data and alerts.
6. TxS2 Staff emails the forms to each individual identified.
7. The individual TxS2 User completes the forms and emails them to syndromic-surveillance@dshs.texas.gov.
8. DSHS assigns TxS2 User accounts and notifies the User of their account information.

Local Health Departments

Local Health Departments that need access to view data and alerts within their PHR must sign the DSHS LHD MOU to gain access to the TxS2 system. Please follow the steps below to complete the registration process (see Appendix C for a checklist).

1. The LHD completes the Contractor Vendor Information Form and emails the form to syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov. This form sets up your LHD as a vendor with DSHS for the purpose of executing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for accessing data. If the LHD already has a vendor number, which most LHDs already have, please include it on the form.
2. Procurement and Contracting Services sends the LHD MOU via DocuSign to the signatory and contact identified on the Contractor Vendor Information Form. Please ensure the email addresses for these two people are correct.
3. The LHD obtains the authorized signature and returns the signed MOU to Procurement and Contracting Services.
4. DSHS signs the MOU and the fully executed contract is sent to the LHD by Procurement and Contracting Services.
5. The LHD emails syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov with list of specific staff members within their organization that should have access to TxS2 for viewing data and alerts.
6. TxS2 Staff emails the forms to each individual identified.
7. The individual TxS2 User completes the forms and emails them to syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov.
8. DSHS assigns TxS2 User accounts and notifies the User of their account information.

DSHS Public Health Regional Offices and Central Office

DSHS staff in both the PHR Offices and at the Central Office that need access to view data and alerts must to sign the TxS2 User Access Agreement to gain access to the TxS2 system. Please follow the steps below to complete the registration process (see Appendix D for a checklist).

1. The PHR/Central Office Program management emails syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov with list of specific staff members within their organization that should have access to TxS2 for viewing data and alerts.
2. TxS2 Staff emails the TxS2 User Access Agreement to each individual identified.
3. The individual TxS2 User completes the TxS2 User Access Agreement and emails the form to syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov.
4. DSHS assigns TxS2 User accounts and notifies the User of their account information.

Section 4. Responsibilities

DSHS is responsible for developing and maintaining the TxS2 system in a secure environment, developing and maintaining policies and procedures for TxS2, and for maintaining User access to TxS2.

Individual TxS2 Users are responsible for following DSHS policies and procedures, including the HHS Acceptable Use Policy found in the HHS Acceptable Use Agreement every user must sign, to safeguard the data and to share, access, use, and store the data in a secure, confidential manner in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws governing the protection of health-related information.

Organizations are also responsible for alerting DSHS when a user has left their organization and their credentials must be revoked.

Section 5. Agreement Renewal

The TxS2 MOU is effective on the date of DSHS signature and terminates on the fifth anniversary of the effective date, unless renewed or terminated. The MOU may be extended for one additional five-year term. The MOU is reviewed on an annual basis to determine if there are material changes to the MOU. Specific requirements for amending and extending the MOU are provided in the terms of the MOU.

The User Access Agreement is effective on the date the TxS2 User account is created and must be renewed every 2 years. The User Access Agreement may be terminated at any time by the User's entity or DSHS.

Section 6. Points of Contact

Name	Role	Email
TxS2 Team	General Inquires	syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov
TxS2 Support	Technical Support	TxS2Support@dshs.texas.gov

Section 7. Revision History

Date	Version	Action	Section
05/04/16	1	New procedure	
07/12/16	2	Separated registration steps by entity type and other minor updates and revisions.	All
01/10/17	3	Updated registration steps for Data Providers located outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S to be in line with Meaningful Use status. Other minor updates and revisions were completed.	All
04/05/17	4	Minor updates and revisions were completed.	All
11/01/17	5	Minor edits.	All
2/14/19	6	Updating links to register and request access.	All
5/2/19	7	Contacts updated.	Section 3
3/26/20	8	Updated information about TALHO, took out old phone numbers, added information about EMS and Poison, added information about the HHS AUA, and other minor updates, and accessibility compliance.	All

Appendix A. - Data Providers (outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S)

Below is a checklist of forms/steps to be completed to register Data Providers (located outside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S).

- Email syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov that you intend to submit data.
- Contractor Vendor Information Form
- DSHS Data Provider MOU
- Email syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov with list of specific staff members within your organization that should have access to TxS2 for viewing data and alerts.
- TxS2 Users – Complete the TxS2 User Access Agreement and the HHS Acceptable Use Agreement.
- Work with DSHS Information Technology through onboarding and testing.
- Submit data on a daily basis into the production environment.
- Notify TxS2 staff when users leave so that TxS2 staff can terminate their access to the system.

Appendix B. - Data Providers (inside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S)

Below is a checklist of forms/steps to complete to register Data Providers that are located inside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S. Please note – these steps are only for gaining access to view data within the TxS2 system. Data Providers located inside PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S should work with the contacts identified for the Tarrant County Public Health system (phinformatics@tarrantcounty.com) or the Houston Health Department system (syndromic@houstontx.gov), respectively, to establish a connection to submit data.

- Contractor Vendor Information Form
- DSHS System User MOU
- Email syndromic-surveillance@dshs.texas.gov with list of specific staff members within your organization that should have access to TxS2 for viewing data and alerts.
- TxS2 Users – Complete the TxS2 User Access Agreement and the HHS Acceptable Use Agreement.
- Notify TxS2 staff when users leave so that TxS2 staff can terminate their access to the system.

Appendix C. - Local Health Departments

Below is a checklist of forms/steps to be completed to register Local Health Departments.

- Contractor Vendor Information Form (or provide Vendor Information Number)
- DSHS LHD MOU
- Email syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov with list of specific staff members within your organization that should have access to TxS2 for viewing data and alerts.
- TxS2 Users – Complete the TxS2 User Access Agreement and the HHS Acceptable Use Agreement.
- Notify TxS2 staff when users leave so that TxS2 staff can terminate their access to the system.

Appendix D. - DSHS PHR Offices and Central Office

Below is a checklist of forms/steps to be completed to register DSHS Public Health Regional Offices and Central Office.

- Email syndromic.surveillance@dshs.texas.gov with list of specific staff members within your organization that should have access to TxS2 for viewing data and alerts.
- TxS2 Users – Complete the TxS2 User Access Agreement and the and the HHS Acceptable Use Agreement, if not already signed.
- Notify TxS2 staff when users leave so that TxS2 staff can terminate their access to the system.