__*Exclusive Breaking News Brief19*__

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 Nationwide Tracking System is Now Live.

Dozens of hospitals are reported to have begun uploading troves of data that will help officials guide the response to the pandemic.

By Jeremy Samuel Faust MD MS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention launched a new surveillance system to track various aspects of the covid-19 pandemic on Friday.

In the first 24 hours alone, "dozens of hospitals" voluntarily uploaded healthcare facility-level data into the system, *Brief19* has learned in an interview with a CDC official involved in the development and launch of the program, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Earlier this week, we were first to report the CDC's plans for this initiative, which leverages the fifteen-year old National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN), a system that has been in use for tracking several measures of quality, by introducing a new data-entry module that hospital officials can use to upload covid-19 data.

The debut of the covid-19 module was announced in an email viewed by *Brief19* that was sent to approximately 7,000 hospitals in the United States (at right).

While still early, the launch was characterized as "successful," the official told us. The system will gather and report data on bed capacity, bed occupancy, and the number of patients requiring mechanical ventilation. It will also publish data on hospital-acquired infections and deaths (see table).

Blast e-mail announcement – March 27, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) is supporting the nation's COVID-19 response by introducing a new COVID-19 Patient Impact and Hospital Capacity Module within NHSN's Patient Safety Component. The Module has been activated for your facility.

The Module enables hospitals to report daily counts of patients with suspected and confirmed COVID-19 diagnoses and current use and availability of hospital beds and mechanical ventilators. NHSN, in turn, will enable state and local health departments to gain immediate access to the COVID-19 data for hospitals in their jurisdictions. COVID-19 data submitted to NHSN will also be used by CDC's emergency COVID-19 response and by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS') COVID-19 tracking system maintained in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response.

The new COVID-19 Module consists of thirteen data elements divided into two sections: Patient Impact and Hospital Capacity. The Module calls for reporting aggregate count data for each calendar day. While daily reporting will provide the timeliest data for response purposes, retrospective reporting of prior day(s) data is encouraged if daily reporting is not feasible. Participation in the Module does not call for patient-level data collection. The data can be submitted using manual entry or CSV file. The Module is available for use by all hospitals in the nation and participation is voluntary. Plans are underway at NHSN to add a COVID-19 Healthcare Worker Impact Module.

A COVID-19 web page is now available on the NHSN website, where you can find the Patient Impact and Hospital Capacity Module Data Collection Form, a Table of Instructions, and a Quick Reference Guide that provide detailed instructions for accessing and submitting data to the Module.

A web streaming training is scheduled for Tuesday March 31, 2020 at 2 PM ET, at which time NHSN will provide additional information about the Module, data submission, and data uses in the COVID-19 response. An invitation to the training will be sent in a separate communication.

If you have any questions, please email us at NHSN@cdc.gov COVID-19 Patient Module.

NHSN's role as a shared platform for healthcare-associated infection surveillance and its collaborations with hospital and health departments throughout the nation provide a valuable foundation for COVID-19 surveillance. Thank you in advance for working with NHSN as we launch the Module, provide information about its use, and invite your participation in a new surveillance effort designed to protect patients and healthcare workers and respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The NHSN Team

So far, participation in the covid-19 reporting module is voluntary, unlike other many other NHSN programs which hospitals are required to do. "The expectation is that hundreds of hospitals would be participating and submitting in a matter of days," the official said. An online training session led by the CDC is scheduled for Tuesday, which officials hope will increase participation.

If other federal agencies, such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services or Congress, use their relevant levers of power to either require or incentivize participation, up to 7,000 hospitals would be in play. The goal is for the program to provide granular information to state and local officials in order to guide the response to a pandemic that continues to evade control, stretching healthcare systems beyond their limits in places like New York. States could also choose to make participation required. If a place like California enacted such a policy, its nearly 500 acute care hospitals would immediately be required to provide daily data.

ALL HOSPITAL BEDS	Total number of all inpatient and outpatient beds, including all staffed, ICU, licensed, and overflow (surge) beds used for inpatients or outpatient.
HOSPITAL INPATIENT BEDS	Inpatient beds, including all staffed, licensed, and overflow (surge) beds used for inpatients.
HOSPITAL INPATIENT BED OCCUPANCY	Total number of staffed inpatient beds that are occupied.
ICU BEDS	Total number of staffed inpatient intensive care unit (ICU) beds.
ICU BED OCCUPANCY	Total number of staffed inpatient ICU beds that are occupied.
MECHANICAL VENTILATORS	Total number of ventilators *available.*
MECHANICAL VENTILATORS IN USE	Total number of ventilators *in use.*
HOSPITALIZED PATIENTS	Patients currently hospitalized in an inpatient care location who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
HOSPITALIZED and VENTILATED PATIENTS	Patients hospitalized in an NHSN inpatient care location who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and are on a mechanical ventilator
HOSPITAL ONSET [HOSPITAL-ACQUIRED SARS-COV-2 INFECTION]	Patients hospitalized in an NHSN inpatient care location with onset of suspected or confirmed COVID-19, 14 or more days after hospitalization.
ED/OVERFLOW	Patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 who are in the ED or any overflow location awaiting an inpatient bed.
ED/OVERFLOW and VENTILATED	Patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 who are in the ED or any overflow location awaiting an inpatient bed and on a mechanical ventilator.
DEATHS	Patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 who died in the hospital, ED, or any overflow location

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/pdfs/covid19/import-covid19-data-508.pdf

The CDC has been criticized for its slow response to the pandemic. This program was described as "the strongest asset that the CDC has in this arena right now."

Brief19 is a daily executive summary of covid-19-related medical research, news, and public policy. It was founded and created by frontline emergency medicine physicians with expertise in medical research critique, health policy, and public policy.

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