



American Statistical Association Statement on New HHS COVID-19 Guidance for Hospital Reporting

July 16, 2020

The American Statistical Association is exceedingly concerned about the [July 10 COVID-19 guidance for hospital reporting](#) from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), specifically the removal of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) from the reporting chain. The CDC has thousands of scientists and administrators who are experienced experts in collecting and reporting these data. Disease surveillance has been its mission since the CDC was established in 1946 with strong transparency protocols in place, as well as secure and recognized mechanisms for providing the data to the public.

Removing the CDC from the reporting chain denies the country of the CDC's unrivaled expertise and experience, introduces the risk of data reporting discontinuities that could obscure the spread and containment of COVID-19, and removes these data from public view. The new reporting guidelines also sidestep the CDC transparency protocols that are critical to ensuring the data are impartial.

A vital role of the federal government is to provide timely, reliable, and objective data on important issues. For these data to be trusted, they should be collected, analyzed, and disseminated by recognized experts in a transparent fashion. Consistency in reporting, methods, and protocols are critical, so data can be compared over time. These data quality procedures and the processes in place to achieve them are especially urgent now, as the country deals with the COVID-19 pandemic.

We urge HHS to reverse its decision and allow the CDC to continue to receive these data and serve its vital, time-honored government role of producing reliable and objective data for the American public and world-wide.