Public Comment

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This comment is in support of the proposed data collection of "Contact Investigation Outcome Reporting Forms, a collection that facilitates CDC working with state and local health departments, and maritime vessels, in conducting contact investigations of individuals exposed to a communicable illnesses during travel."

Evidence suggests that effective contact tracing can be a substantial part of preventing rampant spread of communicable diseases. While reduction in testing delay plays a substantial role, reduction in tracing delay can still be a key factor in preventing disease transmission (Kretzschmar, et al, 2020). Standardization created by this proposed data collection can help reduce the delay and increase the collection of important contact tracing data related to travel. (Ungan, 2006)

In addition, a standardize form of data collection for travel available to local health departments would be beneficial in identifying regional variants of communicable diseases. For instance, there are currently 5 variants of concern to the coronavirus in the United States, 3 of which were first identified outside of the country (CDC, 2021). Faster detection may have led to a reduction in transmission.

Sources:
About variants of the virus that causes covid-19. (n.d.). Retrieved April 16, 2021, from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html
Kretzschmar, M. E., Rozhnova, G., Bootsma, M., Van Boven, M., Van de Wijgert, J., & Bonten, M. (2020). Time is of the Essence: Impact of delays on effectiveness of contact tracing FOR Covid-19, a MODELLING STUDY. doi:10.1101/2020.05.09.20096289
Ungan, M. C. (2006). Standardization through process documentation. *Business Process Management Journal, 12*(2), 135-148. doi:10.1108/14637150610657495

Response:

The goal of this information collection is to obtain sufficient information on the results of contact investigations to share with state and local public health professionals or maritime medical crews to assess the impact of a confirmed communicable disease of public health concern in a traveler, both in terms of spread and health outcomes and to determine if further public health intervention is appropriate.

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