National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Surveillance in Healthcare Facilities
OMB Control No. 0920-1317
Expiration 3/31/2026
Revision ICR

September 20, 2024

Supporting Statement B

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1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

NHSN is an ongoing surveillance system that does not employ probability sampling methods for selecting participating hospitals. The respondent universe for NHSN is potentially all institutions in the United States that provide healthcare. As of March 2020, enrollment in NHSN has continuously increased, with over 25,000 enrolled healthcare facilities and over 22,500 actively reporting healthcare facilities across the U.S. Of these, there are over 5,700 acute care facilities; 8,100 dialysis facilities; 600 long-term acute care facilities, 430 free-standing inpatient rehabilitation facilities; 800 inpatient psychiatric facilities; over 3,800 long-term care facilities; and 5,580 ambulatory surgery facilities.

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

Data collection under the NHSN COVID-19 OMB package vary by component and event type under surveillance as chosen by the participating facility. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the public health threat of respiratory pathogens and highlighted the need for comprehensive, real-time data for prevention and response purposes. In addition to COVID-19, seasonal influenza and RSV can result in substantial burden on hospitals. For those reason, following the expiration of the PHE in May 2023, and prior to the fall 2023 respiratory virus season, optional collection of additional influenza data elements and new data elements capturing information on respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are now available for reporting as part of the COVID-19 hospital data collection through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). There are no changes to NHSN's capability to receive COVID-19 data via the NHSN application webform, CSV upload, or API. Facility and Group-level users can view their own data within the NHSN platform.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with No Response

Participation in NHSN is open to all healthcare institutions with patient population groups that are addressed by the NHSN modules. Participating institutions have complete autonomy on the choice of modules to use, and modules are reported each year. Healthcare institutions must apply for membership in NHSN by completing a series of forms that include identifying and contact information and agree to collect and report data using the NHSN protocols. However, many stakeholders external to CDC encourage or require participation in NHSN for varying purposes. The flexibility of NHSN that permits healthcare institutions to choose from a wide array of options while participating in a national surveillance system that will permit them to comply with accreditation requirements and provide

confidentiality to them and their patients have resulted in increasing numbers of participants. Three examples are provided below.

- As of March 2020, 36 states, the District of Columbia, and Philadelphia require facilities in their jurisdictions to join NHSN to comply with legal requirements – including but not limited to state or federal laws, regulations, or other requirements – for mandatory reporting of healthcare facility-specific adverse event, prevention practice adherence, and other public health purposes.
- The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has identified NHSN as the surveillance mechanism to enable healthcare facilities to report HAI and prevention practice adherence data in fulfillment of CMS's quality measurement reporting requirements for those data.
- As of May 8, 2020, CMS requires nursing homes to report cases of COVID-19 directly to CDC via NHSN. CMS also requires nursing homes to fully cooperate with CDC surveillance efforts around COVID-19 spread and makes the data publicly available on a CMS website. Failure to report a case of COVID-19 or persons under investigation (PUI) may result in an enforcement action.

4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be undertaken

NHSN is a surveillance system has integrated legacy patient and healthcare personnel safety surveillance systems managed by the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion (DHQP) at CDC, which has served as the successful pilot tests of the NHSN surveillance methods. Those systems were the National Nosocomial Infection Surveillance (NNIS) system, the National Surveillance System for Healthcare Workers (NaSH), and the Dialysis Surveillance Network (DSN).

5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

It is the responsibility of the CDC Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion, Surveillance Branch staff to manage and analyze data collected through NHSN. Also, facilities and groups of facilities (quality improvement organizations, state health departments, prevention collaborative) can analyze their data for their purposes.