



2021 Syndromic Surveillance Symposium Speaker Bios

Day 3 – Thursday, November 18, 2021

DAILY OPEN

1:00 PM EST Daily Open, Logistics, and Overview

Charlie Ishikawa, MSPH
Kahuina Consulting, LLC
President & Principal Consultant

BLOCK 1 [SESSIONS STARTING AT 1:15PM EST]

1:15 PM EST Training: COVID VAE Dashboard Demo

Track: Training/Demonstration

Description: Participate in an overview and demonstration of the use of syndromic data to supplement surveillance for vaccine-associated adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination, including the development of VAE syndromes, NSSP's COVID-19 VAE Dashboard, and strategies used to conduct VAE monitoring. Syndromes include a general VAE query as well as a query designed to specifically capture VAE following COVID-19 vaccinations. The VAE Dashboard includes a variety of visualizations, including stratifications by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region, age group, sex, and frequencies of key discharge

diagnosis and chief complaint terms driven by text mining analytics.

Trainers:

- Abigail Gates, MSPH – CDC/NSSP
Abby Gates is an Epidemiologist supporting NSSP with the Syndromic Surveillance Operations Team, Surveillance and Data Branch at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She has an MSPH in environmental health and epidemiology from Emory University, and a BS in environmental science from Georgetown College.
- Michael Sheppard, MS – CDC/NSSP
Michael Sheppard is a Mathematical Statistician at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with the National Syndromic Surveillance Program. Michael has been supporting the National Syndromic Surveillance Program for 3 years and currently works on the Data Science and Innovation Team in the Surveillance and Data Branch. Prior to coming to CDC, Michael graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology with a master's degree in mathematics. He specializes in R programming, natural language processing, and time series analysis.
- Zach Stein, MPH – ICF Contractor, BioSense Platform
- Natasha Close, PhD – Washington State Department of Health
Natasha Close joined the Washington State Department of Health in 2008. As a surveillance epidemiologist, Natasha's primary role is to conduct surveillance and analysis of Washington State's syndromic surveillance data. Natasha holds an MPH and PhD in Epidemiology, both from the University of Washington.
- Kathleen Hartnett, PhD – CDC/NSSP
Kathleen Hartnett is acting lead of the Syndromic Surveillance Operations Team at CDC. Kathleen is a PhD epidemiologist who has led analyses of laboratory and emergency department data for the COVID-19 pandemic and the outbreak of lung injuries associated with the use of e-cigarette, or vaping, products. She joined NSSP in July 2019.

1:15 PM EST Roundtable: Using Race and Ethnicity Data in Syndromic Surveillance

Track: Data Methods and Integration

Description: Identify analytic use cases and practical considerations for using new calculated race and ethnicity variables in NSSP ESSENCE.

Facilitator:

- Amanda Smith, PhD, MPH – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Dr. Amanda Smith is an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer (EIS 2020) assigned to the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) in the Division of Health Informatics and Surveillance. She earned her PhD in Biochemistry and her Master of Public Health from the University of Utah and was the lead

healthcare-associated infection epidemiologist with the Utah Department of Health prior to joining CDC.

Panelist:

- Amanda Dylina Morse, MPH – Washington State Department of Health
Amanda is a surveillance epidemiologist with the Washington State Department of Health in the Rapid Health Information NetwOrk (RHINO) program, where she monitors healthcare encounters for a variety of conditions, with special interest in interpersonal and self-directed violence. Amanda has an MPH in Community-Oriented Public Health Practice from the University of Washington School of Public Health and is faculty in the Department of Health Services, as well as at UW-Bothell in the School of Nursing and Health Studies. She is currently pursuing a PhD in sociology at Queen's University Belfast, where she is examining social connection as a protective factor against suicide among young men with underlying behavioral health diagnoses in Belfast and Galway City. She prefers cats.

1:15 PM EST Roundtable: Defining and Evaluating Mental Health using Syndromic Surveillance

Track: Topical Use Cases

Description: Share principles, processes, and experiences defining mental health-related syndromes, involving subject matter experts, and implementing mental health surveillance.

Facilitators:

- Lakshmi Radhakrishnan, MPH – CDC/NSSP
Lakshmi Radhakrishnan is an epidemiologist at the National Syndromic Surveillance Program, specializing in surveillance, data quality and syndrome definition development. Lakshmi graduated from Emory University with an MPH in epidemiology and has been with the program since 2016.
- Lareina La Flair, PhD, MPH – Washington State Department of Health
Lareina La Flair, MPH, PhD is an injury epidemiologist with the Rapid Health Information Network Program at the Washington State Department of Health, where she focuses on syndromic surveillance of self-directed violence, overdoses, as well as firearm, traffic, and other injuries. She holds a Ph.D. in psychiatric epidemiology from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and an M.P.H. from the Boston University School of Public Health.
- Dylan Pell, MSW, MPH – New Mexico Department of Health
Dylan is a mental health epidemiologist for the New Mexico Department of Health. Dylan has experience working in child welfare, residential treatment, case management, assertive community treatment, and supportive mental health housing. Dylan holds a Master's in Social Work and a Master's in Public Health from New Mexico State University.

1:15 PM EST Roundtable: Variability in Discharge Diagnoses Received and What Can Be Done About It

Track: Practical Applications

Description: Discuss solutions to improve discharge diagnoses data quality at collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Facilitator: Samantha Spoto – Florida Department of Health

Samantha Spoto is the ESSENCE-FL Technical Analyst at the Florida Department of Health. She has a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Chemistry from Florida State University and a Master's of Science in Public Health in Environmental Health from the University of South Florida. Samantha has been with the Florida Department of Health since 2013, previously in county health department epidemiology roles.

30 MINUTE BREAK STARTING AT 2:00PM EST

2:00 PM EST Coffee Break: NSSP CoP Data Quality Subcommittee

Track: Coffee Break

Description: Informal discussion on the first data quality "one-pager" and what to develop next.

Facilitators:

- Jade Hodge – Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- Krystal Collier, BA – Arizona Department of Health Services
Krystal S. Collier is the Syndromic Surveillance Program Coordinator for the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Syndromic Surveillance Program and an active member of the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) Community of Practice (CoP) since 2012. She received her B.A. from Arizona State University in 2006. Her current position includes supporting ADHS' efforts to onboard and maintain data quality from healthcare facilities for Arizona into the BioSense Platform, answering questions for the agency's Meaningful Use Helpdesk, and a syndromic surveillance trainer and facilitator of the Arizona BioSense Workgroup, Arizona BioSense Opioid Workgroup, and Exploratory Analysis Subgroup. She also Chairs the NSSP CoP's Core Committee and an Ambassador to the Data Quality Subcommittee.
- David Swenson, BS, Med – State of NH Department of Health and Human Services
I manage the NH Division of Public Health Services state-wide syndromic surveillance system (onboarding, perform daily data analysis, and work with hospital IT staff/vendors/NH Department of Information Technology staff to maintain and develop the system). I have an IT background, a Master's in Education, have a School of Public Health Informatics Certification from the

University of Illinois at Chicago, have over 15 years of experience in Syndromic surveillance, and am an active member of the NSSP Community of Practice and related NSSP and CSTE committees and workgroups.

2:00 PM EST Coffee Break: Training Ideas to Keep End Users Engaged

Track: Coffee Break

Description: Join the Florida Department of Health to discuss strategies to keep state and local SyS system end users trained and engaged.

Facilitator: Shelby Fawaz, MPH – Florida Department of Health

Shelby Fawaz is an informatician at the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology. She works closely with the syndromic surveillance team to perform system documentation and technical assistance.

BLOCK 2 [SESSIONS STARTING AT 2:30PM EST]

2:30 PM EST Training: Using Laboratory Data with NSSP ESSENCE

Track: Training

Description: Demonstration to learn about the clinical laboratory data available inside of ESSENCE, best practices in using the data, additional resources for understanding clinical laboratory data, and ways to integrate syndromic surveillance with laboratory data.

Trainer: Stephanie Dietz, M.Sc., Ph.D. – CDC/DDPHSS/CSELS/DHIS/SDB

Stephanie Dietz is a biostatistician and the current commercial data lead analyst for the national syndromic surveillance program at CDC. During the response, she was co-lead of laboratory data and the product owner for laboratory data reporting. Stephanie has been working with the ESSENCE laboratory data since late 2018.

2:30 PM EST Roundtable: Utility and Challenges in Monitoring Social Determinants of Health Using Syndromic Surveillance

Track: Data Methods and Integration

Description: Discuss the various SDOH metrics that can be evaluated in syndromic surveillance data, challenges encountered in collecting these data, and tangible next steps to improve data collection.

Facilitator: Lakshmi Radhakrishnan, MPH – CDC/NSSP

Lakshmi Radhakrishnan is an epidemiologist at the National Syndromic Surveillance Program, specializing in surveillance, data quality and syndrome definition development. Lakshmi graduated from Emory University with an MPH in epidemiology and has been with the program since 2016.

2:30 PM EST Breakout: Measuring Mental Health Exasperation in the Era of Lockdowns

Track: Topical Use Cases

Description: Hear how states and local public health agencies are 1) identifying

populations in need and 2) directing public health interventions for mental health conditions.

Moderator: Hussain Yusuf, M.D., M.P.H. – CDC/DDPHSS/CSELS/DHIS/PEB

Presenters:

- Isabel Chung, MPH – Chicago Department of Public Health
Isabel Chung serves a health scientist whose work centers on prevention and treatment of mental illness, violent victimization, and substance use. She joined the Chicago Department of Public Health in 2019 as the city's first behavioral health epidemiologist. Isabel received her Master of Public Health degree in Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology from the University of Illinois at Chicago.
- Mwedusasa Mtenga, MPH – Florida Department of Health
Ms. Mtenga is a surveillance epidemiologist with the Florida Department of Health whose current work involves using syndromic surveillance to describe and analyze trends in drug overdose for the state. Ms. Mtenga primary interest area is the intersection of health, socio-economic determinants, and public policy. Ms. Mtenga received an MPH from Florida A & M University in 2015 and a B.A. in History from Florida State University in 2011.
- Katie McDaniel, MPH – Florida Department of Health
Katie McDaniel has over 8 years of experience in public health and currently serves as the Senior Environmental Epidemiologist at the Florida Department of Health. Her primary responsibility is oversight of the Office of Public Health Research's epidemiology, surveillance, and population survey unit. In addition, Katie is an active participant in national and state workgroups with a primary focus on environmental health and the prevention of injury and violence.
- Alan Mai, MPH – Florida Department of Health
Alan Mai is the Senior Injury Epidemiologist at the Florida Department of Health with over 5 years of experience in public health. His main responsibility is to conduct statewide data surveillance on a wide range of injury and violence prevention topics. Alan is actively involved in the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) along with state workgroups and organizations in preventing injury and violence.
- Vasiliki Georgoulas-Sherry, PhD – Washington State Department of Health
Vasiliki Georgoulas-Sherry, PhD, is the COVID-19 Epidemiologist, Behavioral Health Surveillance Advisor, for the Division of Emergency Preparedness, Resilience, and Response at the Washington State Department of Health.
- Mary Megliola Franzen, MPH – Washington State Department of Health
Mary Megliola Franzen, MPH, is the COVID-19 Behavioral Health Assessment Manager for the Division of Emergency Preparedness, Resilience, and Response at

the Washington State Department of Health.

2:30 PM EST Breakout: Better Practice through Advanced Analytics

Track: Practical Applications

Description: Discover applications of advanced analytics to 1) ease syndrome defining work with machine learning and 2) reducing nuisance alerts in ESSENCE.

Moderator: Sara Chronister, MPH – Maricopa County Department of Public Health (AZ)
Sara Chronister has been involved in the syndromic surveillance community for just over three years, first as the Informatics Epidemiologist with the syndromic surveillance team at the Arizona Department of Health Services, and currently as the Syndromic Surveillance Epidemiologist for Maricopa County Department of Public Health. During the COVID-19 response she has been concurrently acting as the Contact Tracing Team supervisor for Maricopa County. Sara is an avid R learner and co-chairs the R Group for Biosurveillance in the NSSP Community of Practice.

Presenters:

- Hannah P. Cowley, Bachelors of Arts in Cognitive Science – The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory
Hannah P. Cowley (she/her/hers) is an Associate Research Scientist at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, where she leverages data science techniques for advancing precision diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses and neurological disorders. She has a special interest in the epidemiology of such disorders and developing scalable computational tools for the public health community. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Cognitive Science from The Johns Hopkins University in 2018 and is currently pursuing her Master of Public Health from The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health with a focus in biostatistics and mental health.
- Michael Sheppard, MS – CDC/NSSP
Michael Sheppard is a Mathematical Statistician at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with the National Syndromic Surveillance Program. Michael has been supporting the National Syndromic Surveillance Program for 3 years and currently works on the Data Science and Innovation Team in the Surveillance and Data Branch. Prior to coming to CDC, Michael graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology with a master's degree in mathematics. He specializes in R programming, natural language processing, and time series analysis.
- Howard Burkom, PhD – Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory
Howard Burkom is a Principal Professional Staff Mathematician at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. He has worked exclusively in the field of biosurveillance since 2000, adapting analytic methods from various fields for advanced disease monitoring systems and contributing to the enhancement

of ESSENCE surveillance systems and the National Syndromic Surveillance Program's Community of Practice.

30 MINUTE BREAK STARTING AT 3:15PM EST

KEYNOTE AND CLOSING REMARKS

3:45 PM EST Keynote Address (Public Health Action)

Presenters:

- Michelle L. Nolan, MPH, MPhil – NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Michelle L. Nolan is a Senior Epidemiologist at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in the Bureau of Alcohol, Drug Use Prevention, Care and Treatment. In this position, she analyses real-time data, conducts research to inform and evaluate public health responses aimed at reducing overdose mortality, and is a Co-Investigator on the city's Overdose Data to Action grant. Before joining DOHMH she worked at the International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs and was an Epi Scholar with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. She holds an MPH in Epidemiology from the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and is currently a doctoral student in the Epidemiology Department at Columbia.

4:30 PM EST Symposium Closing Session (CoP, CSTE, and CDC)

Speakers:

- Alyaa Altabbaa, MPH – CSTE
- Karl Soetebier, MAPW – CDC/NSSP
Karl Soetebier is the NSSP Informatics Coordinator. Mr. Soetebier leads crosscutting informatics initiatives and supports day-to-day operations. His work ranges from developing technical standards to architectural planning. Mr. Soetebier has more than 20 years' experience in application development and technical leadership, most recently as director for the Office of Public Health Informatics, Georgia Department of Public Health. While there, he oversaw the introduction of Georgia's statewide syndromic surveillance program and developed technical solutions and system modules to support surveillance across a broad range of modalities and health conditions.
- Krystal Collier, BA – CoP Core Committee Chair
Krystal S. Collier is the Syndromic Surveillance Program Coordinator for the

Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Syndromic Surveillance Program and an active member of the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) Community of Practice (CoP) since 2012. She received her B.A. from Arizona State University in 2006. Her current position includes supporting ADHS' efforts to onboard and maintain data quality from healthcare facilities for Arizona into the BioSense Platform, answering questions for the agency's Meaningful Use Helpdesk, and a syndromic surveillance trainer and facilitator of the Arizona BioSense Workgroup, Arizona BioSense Opioid Workgroup, and Exploratory Analysis Subgroup. She also Chairs the NSSP CoP's Core Committee and an Ambassador to the Data Quality Subcommittee.