



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)

December 18, 2009

Patrick J. McConnon, MPH
Executive Director, CSTE
2872 Woodcock Boulevard, Suite 3030
Atlanta, GA 30341

Dear Pat:

Thank you for your letter dated December 4, 2009 regarding the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) adoption of position statement #09-SI-04, "Process Statement for Immediately Nationally Notifiable Conditions." This position statement defines the method and timeline for communication of information regarding immediately nationally notifiable cases between states and territories and CDC. I understand that the position statement was developed from a collaborative CSTE and CDC working group effort and agree that its adoption is critical because it supports state, national, and international public health surveillance priorities.

CDC staff are currently working to implement procedures and processes required to support position statement #09-SI-04. The National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) staff have worked with CDC Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff to ensure that the EOC Watch Officers understand the immediate nationally notifiable condition (INNC) process. The EOC will be responsible for documenting the notification information that is received by phone and will relay this information to the appropriate Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) within CDC. The EOC will implement this improved process for receiving INNCs beginning on Monday, January 4, 2010. As of that date, state or territorial Epidemiologists will need to report that they are calling about the INNCs, which will inform the EOC Watch Officers of the protocol to be followed.

NNDSS staff have also worked with the CDC technical and informatics staff to ensure that electronic data from multiple sources (e.g., National Electronic Telecommunications System for Surveillance [NETSS], National Electronic Disease Surveillance System [NEDSS] Base System master message, HL7-case notifications) will be reviewed in near real-time to identify when an electronic notification of an INNC has been received at CDC and trigger an email alert to the appropriate Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Alerts to SMEs will indicate that electronic notifications have been received at CDC and are ready for review. To ensure appropriate communication within CDC, NNDSS staff are in the process of confirming the SMEs responsible for receiving the INNC notifications. Once confirmed, NNDSS staff will educate the SMEs about the INNC process, inform them about the alerting system being established, and determine their preferred method of accessing the electronic records so appropriate mechanisms for access can be established.

CDC and CSTE share a long history of collaboration on important public health issues. We look forward to working with you on the implementation of this initiative and others that are important to public health surveillance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve".

Stephen B. Thacker, M.D., M.Sc.
Acting Deputy Director for Surveillance, Epidemiology and Laboratory Service