

## **The Public Health Data Standards Consortium Accomplishments to Date**

### ***Why was the Public Health Data Standards Consortium (PHDSC) established?***

The Public Health Data Standards Consortium (PHDSC) coordinates and amplifies the concerns of public health and health services research in the national standards process. While the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) mandates the healthcare industry to use a national standard for the electronic transmission of administrative and financial data there is no clear mandate for public health to adopt these standards. These communities cannot ignore the industry standards when information systems such as hospital discharge databases, disease registries, trauma registries, vital statistics, and immunization registries that are public health surveillance databases, rely on healthcare encounters to trigger data reporting. Many in the public health and research communities have not been actively engaged in the standards process and their voices have been fragmented or silent.

### ***What is the Significance of the Public Health Data Standards Consortium?***

The PHDSC provides and promotes a mechanism for carving out a role for the public health and research communities in an industry-oriented standards process. The PHDSC offers a forum for collectively educating and engaging the public health and research communities about HIPAA and other national standards processes. The PHDSC members represent public health and health services research interests in national standards development activities, where decisions are made about the content and format of standardized data sets.

### ***What has the PHDSC Accomplished?***

In three years, the PHDSC has:

- Attracted a broad-based membership that represents diverse public health and research entities and interests (35 member organizations)  
Established Federal and State Consortium representation on national content committees (National Uniform Billing Committee and National Uniform Claim Committee)
- Educated key leaders in the public health and research communities:
  - The implications of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) on health data
  - The nuts and bolts of the national standards process under HIPAA
- Under contract to the Consortium, the National Association of Health Data Organizations identified and characterized public health and research data needs for State encounter data sets; the Consortium Steering Committee prioritized these data elements and established work groups to address them.
- Developed business cases for selected priority data elements and successfully processed these standards requests through the ANSI X12N Workgroups:
  - Race and ethnicity on institutional claims
  - Mother's Medical Record Number on newborn institutional claims
  - Newborn birth weight on institutional claims.

- Formed Workgroups to research unresolved issues around other priority data elements:
  - External Cause of Injury Coding on institutional claims
  - Payer Category Typology for State and Federal agencies use
- Developed a detailed Educational Strategy to educate the public health and health services research communities on data standards issues.
- Received approval by ANSI ASC X12 to develop a Health Care Services Data Reporting Implementation Guide to provide a uniform framework for robust public health and research utilization data across states. A prototype for this Guide: [www.nahdo.org](http://www.nahdo.org)
- Responded to the Designated Standards Maintenance Organizations (DSMO) review of change requests to the HIPAA transaction standards.

***What are the Next Steps for the PHDSC?***

- The PHDSC will develop a business and marketing plan to guide its efforts over the next 3-5 years.
- The PHDSC is developing a web-based resource center to track and provide educational resources on data standardization and implementation efforts
- The Health Care Services Data Reporting Guide will be expanded and will serve as a model for other essential data needs (e.g. mental health).
- A Work Group will develop and implement additional strategies for overcoming barriers to migrating to national standards.
- The Consortium will respond to HIPAA Notices of Proposed Rulemaking from the perspective of the public health and research communities.
- The Consortium Steering Committee will identify additional priorities during its annual meeting on March 20-21, 2002.