



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary
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To FEMA/HHS Region VI State Health Officers (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)

As you all know, Governors and hospital administrators have recently received letters from HHS Secretary Alex Azar and Vice President Mike Pence regarding the collection of hospital level Essential Elements of Information (EEl)s to be reported through HHS information sharing systems. The data requested in the letter included daily reports on testing, capacity, supplies, utilization, and patient flows to facilitate the public health response to COVID-19. This requested data will directly contribute to high-level federal decision making regarding the reopening of our economy.

I know this request for data sharing from the federal government has been confusing. Many of you have reached out to me to clarify details for this data call. I believe we are effectively and efficiently capturing best available information through our existing platforms. I do not believe collecting facility data directly from hospitals to be shared straight to HHS platforms in Washington D.C will produce consistent and informed data for our Region.

We are transitioning into a period of healthcare service restoration for the COVID-19 response. This phased in approach for opening up our healthcare facilities to offer a full complement of medical services to patients will require sustained data collection activity for the next six months. We will utilize hospital status data to monitor and respond to surges in cases and a probable "second wave" of infection spread to coincide with the beginning of the next influenza season in the fall of 2020.

To support our Opening Up America Again strategy, particularly the reopening of our regions hospitals and other healthcare facilities, I have decided to take the following actions on behalf of FEMA/HHS Region VI:

1. We will continue collecting hospital data from our facilities through our state information sharing platforms (EMResources, ESF-8 Portal).
2. You can inform your health care coalitions and facilities that the state will continue to collect the facility data on their behalf.
3. There is no need for your state to request certification from the Region VI FEMA Regional Administrator (RA) to collect and disseminate data on behalf of your hospitals. We cannot certify or verify that information requested daily from hospitals will meet minimum data capture requirements every day. We only generate the "best available" data which cannot be certified or verified for accuracy and completeness.

Thank you all for your cooperation and collaboration capturing and sharing vital hospital bed data with me and the Region VI federal team during the last six weeks of the COVID-19 response. The information you have provided has been really helpful in developing our regional COVID-19 response strategy and determining scarce resource allocation for our states during this very complex national public health emergency event.

All the Best,

William "Bill" Mangieri
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