



CMSS Statement on Covid-19 Data Integrity and Transparency

The Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS), representing 45 medical specialty societies and more than 800,000 physicians is concerned about the Administration's recent decision to require submission of hospital data on COVID-19 patients directly to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) bypassing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This decision raises serious questions about the credibility, transparency, and availability of data needed by public health officials, researchers, physician leaders, and other stakeholders to advance science-based and data-driven decisionmaking.

As organizations committed to research and science, we fully understand the importance of data integrity, validity, and completeness. Collecting and reporting health data is a primary function of CDC, and the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) provides critically needed information from hospitals and nursing homes that have guided state and federal response to the pandemic. NHSN's public health expertise and data infrastructure supported fully transparent and publicly available data to inform policy and practice.

In this challenging time, we must redouble our efforts to provide public health experts with unlimited, immediate access to the most transparent and comprehensive information possible to guide the country's response to the pandemic. While the administration has indicated their willingness to provide data transparency, there is no immediate plan to make the information public.

The United States is at a critical moment in the pandemic. Many states are experiencing surges, and reliable, comprehensive data are essential to determine the strategies to fight COVID-19 and ensure the distribution of supplies and treatments. CMSS calls upon the Administration to ensure that CDC and its public health authorities retain oversight and expertise in the collection and analysis of COVID-19 data and provide a clear timeline for the fully transparent and publicly available COVID-19 information.