

TO: PA Hospital Leaders and PA Health Care Coalition Members - Acute Care Hospitals

FROM: Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam and the Bureau of Emergency Preparedness & Response, HPP Section

DATE: September 1, 2021

RE: Post-Vaccination Hospitalization Data

The Department of Health continues to make necessary efforts to understand the complex nature of COVID-19, including the prevalence of hospitalizations and the impact of current vaccination efforts on hospitalizations. While Pennsylvania's electronic reportable disease surveillance system (PA-NEDSS) remains the commonwealth's primary system for collection of this public health data, and even with the [Order of the Secretary of Health](#) whose [amendment](#) requires reporting of hospitalizations in PA-NEDSS, the data from PA-NEDSS continues to dramatically undercount the number of individuals hospitalized with COVID-19. This is a disappointing development. Therefore, two additional steps are being taken to ensure that the Department has the information necessary to make appropriate public health decisions, especially in light of the Delta variant.

First, starting on Friday, September 3, new questions will be added, and other questions will be amended, in the Corvena capacity reporting tool. These additional data points must be completed pursuant to Section 1, of the [Order as amended](#), which requires completion of other categories or data fields necessary to support the Department's ongoing efforts to allocate resources and implement mitigation strategies. The new data fields must be completed by **10:00 AM on Tuesday, September 7 and daily thereafter**.

These updates are related to the sections focused on the previous day's admissions. These amended questions are specifically related to persons who have been admitted to your facility whose primary diagnosis and/or cause for admission is COVID-19 and their vaccination status (as defined by the CDC). While we understand that configuration of the data set in automated reporting systems may take some time, we are recommending our Healthcare partners utilize manual reporting of the Corvena capacity reporting tool until automation can be achieved to ensure compliance with the Order.

More information on the new data fields can be found in the attached screenshot of the revised data collection section, as well as the attached data dictionary. Additionally, the Department will be conducting a technical assistance webinar to explain these data sets and answer any questions. This webinar will be held on **Friday, September 3 at 1:00 PM**, and can be accessed at www.zoom.us/j/96125202514. These resources and webinar links will also be distributed through our healthcare coalition and Quality Assurance messaging pathways. We hope that these resources will assist all facilities in ensuring complete and accurate reporting of these data fields. For other general questions about the Corvena reporting requirement, please reach out to your PHMC Healthcare Coalition Regional Manager, or contact Paul Hoffman, HPP Program Manager at pfhoffman@pa.gov.

Second, in order to adequately understand this daily data within the context of the broader COVID-19 pandemic in Pennsylvania, the Department is requesting each facility fill out a one-time form

([LINK](#)) with your facility's historical admissions by vaccination status for the period from 12:00AM January 1, 2021 through 11:59PM September 6, 2021. This form is to be completed by **5:00 PM on Wednesday, September 8.**

When searching for relevant hospitalizations due to COVID-19, please use U07.1 as the principal diagnosis code, except in the following circumstances (which the Department would still recognize as hospitalizations due to COVID-19):

- If the patient was admitted for sepsis from COVID-19, sepsis may be the principal diagnosis and U07.1 may be coded as a secondary diagnosis
- If the patient was admitted for hypoxia, shortness of breath, ARDS, or respiratory failure from COVID-19, hypoxia, shortness of breath, ARDS, or respiratory failure may be the principal diagnosis and U07.1 may be coded as a secondary diagnosis
- If the patient was admitted for pneumonia from COVID-19, pneumonia may be the principal diagnosis and U07.1 may be coded as a secondary diagnosis
- If the patient was pregnant and was admitted for COVID-19, there may be an obstetrical code indicating an infection as the principal diagnosis and U07.1 would be sequenced as a secondary code

The Department is grateful to our hospital partners for their unwavering commitment to their community and patients. We recognize data reporting can be onerous, and while we have tried to streamline it as best as possible, without comprehensive hospitalization reporting in NEDSS, we must take these additional reporting steps to have vital public health information. Your cooperation in increasing reporting through NEDSS, the timely daily reporting through Corvena, and the one-time "look-back" survey are greatly appreciated. The Department is pleased to answer your questions to ensure timely submission of these data; questions can be directed to ra-dhCOVIDvax@pa.gov.