

The information below is provided as guidance for framing the discussion on what questions the Committee may wish to see answered by data should healthcare-associated MRSA be made reportable to Public Health.

What is public health surveillance?

Public health surveillance is the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (e.g., regarding agent/hazard, risk factor, exposure, health event) essential to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health practice, closely integrated with the timely dissemination of these data to those responsible for prevention and control.

Public health surveillance data can be used to:

- guide immediate action for cases of public health importance;
- measure the burden of a disease (or other health-related event), including changes in related factors, the identification of populations at high risk, and the identification of new or emerging health concerns;
- monitor trends in the burden of a disease (or other health-related event), including the detection of epidemics (outbreaks) and pandemics;
- guide the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs to prevent and control disease, injury, or adverse exposure;
- evaluate public policy;
- detect changes in health practices and the effects of these changes;
- prioritize the allocation of health resources;
- describe the clinical course of disease; and
- provide a basis for epidemiologic research.