



# PHIN

## Messaging Services

### Background

Standard messages and associated vocabularies are a critical part of ensuring interoperability among public health systems as well as ensuring that public health systems can work with health care, environmental, homeland defense, and other external systems and networks. Implementing standard messages is a key strategy for the Public Health Information Network (PHIN).

### Overview

The PHIN Messaging Team works with relevant standards organizations such as Health Level Seven (HL7) and Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP) to extend and harmonize message use case requirements and information models to produce message specifications and mapping guides that support specific public health business needs.

Current message work product documentation focuses on the areas of public health case reporting, biosurveillance, and laboratory processing for public health use.

Draft versions of messaging work products are posted to the PHIN Messaging Collaboration workspace at CDC Team SiteScape ([www.team.cdc.gov](http://www.team.cdc.gov)) for a 30-day review by CDC and CDC Partners. Anyone involved with messaging is invited to review and comment.

### Announcing the PHIN Messaging Collaboration Workspace

The Messaging Collaboration space on Sitescape was created to allow partners the opportunity to review and provide feedback about the content of the PHIN messaging work products and to discuss other messaging topics of interest. The PHIN Messaging Team is focused on an effort to implement a consistent process for presenting draft versions of message documents to partners for review and feedback prior to publishing to the PHIN Web site. The partner review and feedback process for each draft work product includes a 30-day review period after which changes are recorded, impact assessed, and either approved, deferred, or rejected. To accommodate deferred and/or ongoing changes, a finalized messaging work product document will begin a 6-month release cycle (as needed). Information about the new messaging work products and the review process can be found under the PHIN-Messaging Collaboration-Discussion about Messaging folder on Sitescape.

We invite you to access CDC PHIN Sitescape and familiarize yourself with the Messaging Collaboration folder structure and available information. If you should need access to these folders, please contact the CDC Team Helpdesk at [cdcteamsupport@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcteamsupport@cdc.gov).



## CDC National Center for Public Health Informatics (NCPHI) Addresses the Use of HL7 V2.5 Messaging Standard

In June, 2006, CDC issued new guidance that calls for use of Health Level Seven (HL7) Version 2.5 as the national standard for public health entities to receive electronic messages by January 1, 2008. This consensus decision was based on the goal of exchanging public health information electronically by a wider user base than was possible under the previous guidance, which called for use of HL7 Version 3 (V3) messages. Specifically, this change requires that National Notifiable Disease (NND) messages be submitted to CDC in HL7 V2.5 format, not the HL7 V3 format.

CDC's National Center for Public Health Informatics (NCPHI) notes that this position statement moves public health into alignment with the implementation guidance of the Health Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP) on the use of HL7 V2.5 format as the national standard for public health entities to receive electronic messages for biosurveillance and electronic laboratory reporting. HITSP Implementation Guidance allows for the exchange of biosurveillance and electronic laboratory data in the form of clinical documents in addition to HL7 V2.5 messages. The Department of Health and Human Services is expected to make the HITSP Implementation Guidance a requirement for all electronic health information used by federally sponsored health systems.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ref. CDC Public Health Information Network (PHIN) News & Highlights Web site:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/phn/phn\\_news.html#hie](http://www.cdc.gov/phn/phn_news.html#hie)

### PHIN Messaging Work Products

Key objectives for the new messaging work products:

- Create work products that address the needs of specific work groups [programs vs. technical groups]
- Ensure message standards conformance for each message specification
- Embrace reusability of the message specification where applicable

A **Message Use Case** describes the data flow requirements for messaging exchange.

The **Message Structure Specification** describes in detail the structure of the message.

A **Message Profile** describes the detailed static structure of a specific message and contains the HL7 segments, fields, components and subcomponents supported in the message.

The **Message Mapping Guide** provides for the mapping of a Program's data elements of interest into the appropriate message specification fields.

The **Messaging Vocabulary** ensures the use of standard PHIN vocabularies.

### Key PHIN Contact Information

**Email:** PHINtech@cdc.gov    **Help Desk:** 800-532-9929    **Website:** <http://www.cdc.gov/phn>