

National Data Quality COVID-19 Audit Template

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Overview

Government reports and media coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States has shown variation in how each state has approached data collection, reporting, and monitoring of COVID-19 cases. Each of these variables impacts a state's public health response in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Delaware State Auditor Kathy McGuinness identified an opportunity to develop a general framework that states could use to assess data quality that would ensure a consistent approach for comparing results nationwide. With initial coordination assistance from the National State Auditors Association, a multistate audit task force with representation from state auditors' offices in Delaware, Florida, Mississippi, Ohio, and Pennsylvania was formed to consider methods for reviewing the following related to COVID-19 cases:

- Data collection,
- Data quality,
- Communication, and
- Best practices.

The COVID-19 Audit Task Force created this universal Performance Audit template to provide a consistent approach for states to assess data quality and subsequent virus mitigation efforts both individually and collectively. Its intent is to supply meaningful and understandable results regarding the accuracy of data collection and interpretation as a way to improve understanding of the pandemic's progression and to better guide public health actions through the use of applied analytical techniques. This effort may also result in recommendations and best practices states can adopt for use during this pandemic or future public health crises.

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Background:

The following audit template is intended to be broadly applicable across states. Although this engagement is entirely voluntary for states to undertake, the hope is for states choosing to participate to initiate a Performance Audit this fall. Though your state may have additional questions that you wish to add, consistent results on this brief set of questions will help State Auditors, public health officials, the general public, and those charged with governance to better understand the available data on cases and better address testing and data tracking in the future. States participating and wanting to also share their results with other participating states will have the ability to send information electronically to state_auditor@delaware.gov. Delaware State Auditor Kathy McGuiness will coordinate with the National State Auditors Association to disseminate.

To help us establish an informational baseline and understand your state's audit approach, please include answers to the following:

- 1) What, if any, professional standards did your office follow in conducting this Performance Audit (Yellow Book, Red Book, other, none)?
- 2) When your office undertook this audit, in what re-opening phase was your state in?
- 3) In undertaking this Performance Audit,
 - a. What was the timeframe (dates) of data and information reviewed, and
 - b. How many months of data and information did your office review?
- 4) Did you experience any difficulty in obtaining the information you needed from the appropriate agencies?
- 5) Were the results of this Performance Audit beneficial to your state?

Intent:

How can states increase the accuracy of data collection and interpretation and more effectively apply analytical techniques to improve their understanding of the pandemic's progression and to better guide public health actions?

Objectives:

Collection

- What COVID-19 case data did the state collect?
 - Did the data collected include:
 - Test type (e.g., nasal or throat swab, antibody test, etc.),
 - Test results,
 - Case information (e.g., gender, race, age, ethnicity, location, exposure source, etc.),
 - Case classifications (e.g., confirmed and probable cases), and
 - Outcome (e.g., recoveries and deaths)?
- What COVID-19 treatment data did the state collect?
 - Did the data collected include:
 - Availability of ICU beds,
 - Availability of ventilators, and
 - Patient health status (e.g., hospitalizations, ICU admissions and/or patients with underlying conditions)?
- How frequently did the state collect data for each variable?

Reporting

- Did the state identify entities performing testing?
- What guidance did the state provide to entities performing COVID-19 testing for reporting results?
 - How was the guidance disseminated to those entities?
 - If updates were made to the guidance, how did the state ensure entities were notified of the changes?
 - Did the guidance include:
 - What information was to be reported,
 - How to determine residence (e.g., was the person tested a resident of their county,¹ another county and tested in the county, another state and visiting the state, etc.), and
 - How to report revisions to previously reported testing results and what documentation must be submitted to support the revisions?

¹ The term county as used in this document is intended to encompass equivalent terminology for states that do not use county to define administrative divisions within the state.

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- Was the data collected and reported adequate for monitoring purposes and was the data reported timely?
 - Were results reported including:
 - The number of positive COVID-19 tests,
 - The number of positive COVID-19 antibody tests,
 - The number of negative COVID-19 tests,
 - The number of negative COVID-19 antibody tests,
 - The number of recoveries,
 - The number of deaths,
 - Source of exposure,
 - Confined settings tests (e.g. long-term care facilities, rehabilitation facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, prisons and jails),
 - Breakdown of data by county, and
 - As of dates for the results published?
 - Were available ICU beds reported?
 - Did the state provide guidance on how to count available ICU beds?
 - Was the data timely updated?
 - Did the published data include the as of date for the data?
 - Were available ventilators reported?
 - Did the state provide guidance on how to count available ventilators?
 - Was the data timely updated?
 - Did the published data include the as of date for the data?
- How did the state differentiate between positive COVID-19 tests and positive COVID-19 antibody tests in reporting?

Monitoring

- Did the state monitor how COVID-19 testing results were coded to determine whether the cases were coded and reported in accordance with established guidelines?
- Did the state adequately monitor or sample COVID-19 testing processes (test administration) and resulting data (result verification) to ensure accuracy?
- Did the state provide sufficient guidance to entities providing care to COVID-19 patients related to determining the cause of death, including when co-morbidity conditions existed?
- Did the state adequately monitor the use of provided guidance in reporting the cause of death?
- Did the state have adequate processes in place to contact and monitor COVID-19 positive individuals?
 - How often did the state contact positive individuals?
 - What procedures do they follow if they cannot contact positive individuals?

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- How long does the state follow-up with individuals?
- What were the state's procedures if symptoms intensified for the individuals they contact?