



Department of Health

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

SALLY DRESLIN, M.S., R.N.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

April 14, 2020

Re: New York State Public Health Surveillance System for COVID-19

Dear QE Executive Directors:

The current COVID-19 outbreak has been declared a global pandemic. As part of the response to the current situation, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is utilizing all available health information technology sharing resources, including the Statewide Health Information Network for New York (SHIN-NY), to address the threat. These activities are consistent with Public Health Law (PHL) Section 206(1)(d), which authorizes the Department to investigate the causes of disease and epidemics and are included in section 1.2.2 of the SHIN-NY Privacy and Security Policies. Additionally, the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has released a notification that it will be exercising its enforcement discretion under HIPAA to allow uses and disclosures of Protected Health Information (PHI) by business associates for Public Health and Health Oversight activities in response to COVID-19. (<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/notification-enforcement-discretion-hipaa.pdf>)

To support the response, the Department is building a registry of COVID-19 patients. The objective of this registry is to better identify disease trends across the State to optimize the government's response to the current pandemic. The information in the registry will be used to better understand critical information about hospital length of stay, medication usage, equipment utilization, understand comorbidities associated with disease and disease burden in New York State.

The Department will share positive laboratory results from the ECLRS system with QEs via the NYeC statewide infrastructure to retrieve continuity of care documents from the SHIN-NY for the COVID-19 registry. Additionally, QEs will also create a subscription list based on the positive laboratory result and those identified with COVID-19 diagnoses to automatically send incremental HL7 and ADT messages to the COVID-19 registry.

NYSDOH has contracted with CarahSoft to build this registry. CarahSoft's subcontractor, Cloudticity, will use tools offered by Amazon Web Service (AWS) to build the registry. CarahSoft has Business Associate Agreements (BAAs) with AWS and Cloudticity. Through these agreements, Cloudticity will access the minimum necessary information to construct the registry and surveillance system, and AWS is prohibited from accessing PHI unless directed by NYSDOH.

The NYS DOH COVID-19 registry will be built to FedRAMP Moderate baseline security requirements and will be physically located in a facility approved for use by government clouds.

Questions can be directed to the following e-mail address: SHIN-NY@health.ny.gov.