

## **CDC Public Information and Communications**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Public Health Information Network (PHIN) is a national initiative to increase the capacity of public health agencies to electronically exchange data and information across organizations and jurisdictions. In addition, the Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects, Health Studies Branch (DEHHE/HSB) at the CDC has developed a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) toolkit, which is used by public health practitioners and emergency management officials to determine the health status and basic needs of the affected community in a quick and low-cost manner.

### **Public Health Information Network (PHIN)**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Public Health Information Network (PHIN) is a national initiative to increase the capacity of public health agencies to electronically exchange data and information across organizations and jurisdictions (e.g., clinical care to public health, public health to public health and public health to other federal agencies). To do so, PHIN promotes the use of standards and defines functional and technical requirements for public health information exchange.

The mission of PHIN is to establish and support shared policies, standards, practices, and services that facilitate efficient public health information access, exchange, use, and collaboration among public health agencies and with their clinical and other partners. The vision of PHIN is an integrated healthcare and public health system using information effectively to advance population health and well-being.

Activities for the PHIN initiative including strategic planning, administration, management, and operations reside in CDC's Division of Health Informatics and Surveillance (DHIS). These activities include:

- Developing and disseminating requirements, standards, specifications, and overall architecture for public health information exchange.

- Monitoring the information exchange capabilities of state and local health agencies.

- Developing methods to validate, test, and certify electronic messages.

- Promoting the use of public health information exchange to improve emergency preparedness outcomes.

- Communicating the value of public health information exchange to public health practice.

- Working with various CDC programs to:

  - Establish governance for policies, standards, practices, and services.

Standardize the approach to system interoperability.

Ensure alignment with the Nationwide Health Information Network (NwHIN) and other federal initiatives.

Working with federal partners and other external stakeholders to:

Ensure that the public health community is represented through a governance model.

Support the interoperability of the public health segment of the federal health IT architecture.

For all PHIN assistance or additional information, please contact:

**Public Health Information Network (PHIN)**

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For more information on [PHIN](http://www.cdc.gov/phin/) visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/phin/>

**Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER)**

During a disaster, public health and emergency management professionals must be prepared to respond to and meet the needs of the affected public in a timely manner. HSB's rapid needs assessment toolkit, the Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER), can be used by public health practitioners and emergency management officials to determine the health status and basic needs of the affected community in a quick and low-cost manner. Gathering health and basic needs information using valid statistical methods allows public health and emergency managers to prioritize their responses and to make informed decisions regarding the distribution of resources. The [CASPER toolkit](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/surveillance/pdf/casper_toolkit_version_2_0_508_compliant.pdf) can be found at: [https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/surveillance/pdf/casper\\_toolkit\\_version\\_2\\_0\\_508\\_compliant.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/surveillance/pdf/casper_toolkit_version_2_0_508_compliant.pdf)

The Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects, Health Studies Branch (DEHHE/HSB) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed the CASPER toolkit to assist personnel from any local, state, regional, or federal public health departments in conducting the CASPER during a disaster. One of the main objectives in developing this toolkit is to standardize the assessment procedures focusing on United States disaster response. The CASPER toolkit provides guidelines on data collection tool development, methodology, sample selection, training, data collection, analysis, and report writing.

The CDC Health Studies Branch (HSB) also provides scientific consultation, technical assistance, and disaster epidemiology training to:

local, state, or foreign health departments,

federal agencies,

non-governmental organizations,

professional interest groups,

international organizations,

academic institutions, and

foreign governments.

To learn more about requesting HSB assistance, please visit [HSB's Disaster Training and Response webpage](#).

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