

Population Association of America Association of Population Centers

Office of Government and Public Affairs

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Statement from the Presidents of the Population Association of America and Association of Population Centers July 2020

As the presidents of the Population Association of America and the Association of Population Centers, we are alarmed by recent [guidance](#) issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that removes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from the hospital data (testing, capacity and utilization, and patient flows) reporting chain.

Population scientists, including demographers, economists, sociologists, and statisticians, in the private, public, and academic sectors rely on public data to conduct their scientific research and research training activities. Our members depend on federal statistical agencies to collect, disseminate, and store public data adhering to the highest professional and ethical standards. We appreciate the painstaking steps that federal agencies take, often working with advisory committees and data users, to establish objective, credible procedures for gathering, sharing, and protecting public data.

The latest HHS guidance is an affront to our organizations' professional standards and falls far short of expectations we have for enacting change in federal data and reporting guidelines. A change of this magnitude, particularly during a pandemic, should be considered in a transparent fashion, involving experts inside and outside of the federal government. Further, the rationale for this revised guidance should be communicated and evaluated publicly to ensure that the change is warranted and does not adversely affect the quality and accessibility of these essential data.

We urge HHS to revoke the current guidance, re-establish CDC's role in the hospital data reporting chain, and reassure the public that these data will continue to be shared with the public in an open, impartial manner.

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