



Local Health Department and Fusion Center Collaboration for Advancing Health Security

*Prepared by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Health Security
and the National Association of County and City Health Officials*

WHAT ARE FUSION CENTERS?

Fusion centers are state- and locally-operated hubs that gather, analyze, and disseminate threat-related information to support homeland security. They leverage U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) Intelligence Officers (IOs) as embedded facilitators to synthesize reportable information into intelligence and inform the Federal Government of localized threats. Integrating healthcare and public health (HPH) partners into these processes enhances preparedness, situational awareness, and response capabilities across the United States. This collaboration enables a comprehensive approach to human-caused and natural threats that better equip communities to anticipate, mitigate, and recover from health-related risks.

Fusion centers also support prevention, protection, and response by facilitating two-way communication among federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) government entities and private-sector partners. They analyze region-specific threats and share information with operational partners and decision-makers, including information related to terrorism, criminal activity, public health emergencies, and environmental hazards. When enhanced by embedded DHS I&A IOs, the multidisciplinary structure of fusion centers positions them to incorporate public health perspectives into broader homeland security efforts.

Case Study: The Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC) fosters strong relationships with HPH sector partners by supporting them with written threat-related intelligence products, briefings, and presentations on homeland security topics. MCAC also fosters two-way sharing of information and intelligence with the HPH-sector on threats including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE), cybersecurity, supply chain integrity, and targeted violence to promote situational awareness of the current threat environment. MCAC's relationships with state, local, and private HPH-sector partners led to the creation of the Maryland Health Intelligence Network, which MCAC, MDH, and MIEMSS use to consistently deliver information and intelligence to partners.

DHS I&A INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS AS FACILITATION POINTS

DHS I&A IOs serve as critical facilitators and intelligence mediums within the fusion center network. Their roles include:

- **Intelligence Integration:** IOs work directly with fusion center analysts to report raw information and produce unique finished intelligence products that meet federal intelligence standards
- **Two-Way Information Flow:** IOs serve as primary liaisons between federal intelligence capabilities and state and local operations. IOs can ensure HPH-related threat information reaches appropriate federal partners while delivering federally produced intelligence to state and local stakeholders



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- **Subject Matter Expertise:** IOs provide guidance on intelligence writing standards, classification protocols, and dissemination procedures, ensuring HPH information is properly formatted for inclusion in raw intelligence and finished intelligence products
- **Access Facilitation:** IOs enable fusion center analysts and can act as liaisons, helping HPH partners access federal intelligence databases, systems, and networks that would otherwise be unavailable to state and local entities
- **Training and Capacity Building:** IOs conduct intelligence tradecraft training for fusion center personnel and can include and sensitize HPH partners for inclusion into a fusion center's threat reporting network

This integration, supported by DHS I&A IOs, enhances a community's ability to detect, assess, and respond to health-related threats.

WHY COLLABORATE?

Integrating healthcare and public health (HPH) partners into fusion center operations strengthens community preparedness and response to both human-caused and natural threats. Key benefits include:

Enhanced Situational Awareness: Public health partners gain access to timely, actionable intelligence for rapid detection of emerging threats.

Improved Prevention, Protection, Response and Recovery: Fusion centers receive expert health information, improving planning, mitigation, and resilience.

Expanded Data Sharing: Collaboration enables broader surveillance and alerting systems for threat detection and management.

Strengthened Trust Networks: Regular engagement builds mutual trust and streamlines information flow during routine operations and crises.

Enhanced Intelligence Products: DHS I&A IOs work with fusion center analysts to incorporate HPH insights into DHS analysis, ensuring health security considerations reach federal decision-makers.

Access to Federal Intelligence: HPH partners gain appropriate access to classified and unclassified federal intelligence relevant to health security.

Validated Threat Reporting: Health-sourced threat information is disseminated into federal intelligence holdings.

Case Study: Within Florida, public health maintains representation at each regional fusion center as well as at the state level. Additionally, partners from Florida's Healthcare Coalition Network frequently serve on fusion center advisory councils, ensuring that healthcare and public health perspectives are embedded in threat assessment, information sharing, and operational planning. This engagement strengthens situational awareness, enhances early warning capabilities, and supports coordinated response actions across the state.



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HPH organizations contribute risk assessments, surveillance data, subject-matter expertise on CBRNE hazards, and operational coordination during incidents requiring public messaging or healthcare system support.

BUILDING HEALTH SECURITY CAPACITY TOGETHER

Fusion centers and HPH organizations can jointly advance national health security by:

- **Risk Assessments:** Conducting joint evaluations of vulnerabilities within HPH sectors, such as food and agriculture, using a One Health approach.
- **Information Sharing Tools:** Implementing technologies and processes for rapid, secure exchange of health intelligence.
- **Training and Exercises:** Including HPH partners in homeland security drills and integrating intelligence entities into public health exercises.
- **Coordinated Response Efforts:** Aligning health intelligence with emergency management frameworks to integrate public health considerations into response planning.

Some fusion centers employ dedicated health analysts who integrate HPH metrics into intelligence products and leverage platforms such as the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN).

PATH FORWARD

Strengthening HPH integration within fusion centers offers many benefits:

- Development of coordinated health security plans
- Ongoing discussions that align public health priorities with homeland security objectives
- Expanded access to relevant public health data systems
- Enhanced, secure data sharing processes
- Joint reassessments of emerging threats and vulnerabilities

By integrating epidemiological trends, syndromic surveillance signals, environmental monitoring data, and healthcare system capacity indicators, intelligence products facilitated by DHS I&A IOs can create robust understanding of emerging hazards and lead to adjusting regional threat profiles accordingly. This collaboration enables earlier identification of cross-sector vulnerabilities (e.g., impacts on critical infrastructure, supply chains, or at-risk populations) and supports more accurate prioritization of resources, mitigation strategies, and operational planning across the homeland security enterprise. Continued collaboration informs decision-making, strengthens community protection, and supports a resilient national health security system.

HOW TO CONNECT

Each fusion center is structured differently. Here are practical ways to connect:

- Find your closest fusion center: [Fusion Center Locations and Contact Information](#)
- Learn more about the fusion center network: [National Fusion Center Association](#)
- Contact your local DHS I&A Intelligence Officer: IA-P-FID-FST@hq.dhs.gov
- Ask about liaison programs and training opportunities for public health officials.



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- Identify health analysts or designated points of contact for HPH partners.
- Share your health alerts with the fusion center.
- Learn about suspicious activity reporting and take DHS Online SAR Trainings.
[Online SAR Trainings | Homeland Security](#)
- Invite the fusion center to provide briefings to your department or coalition.
- Collaborate on threat assessments and planning for special events.



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