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New \$255M Federal Grant Will Help State, Local Public Health Agencies Modernize Data Systems.

The program looks to improve data sharing infrastructure and processes for public health agencies to better detect and manage health threats.

Coping with future public health threats means more state and local agencies—many of which rely on aging infrastructure and still collect data by faxes and manual entry—must modernize their data systems, experts say.

To do that, a new \$255 million federal program will support state, local and tribal governments' data modernization projects by offering them technical assistance, policy and legal advice, and guidance documents, among other resources. Funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Data Modernization Implementation Center program will help develop robust and secure data exchanges among public health agencies, said Jennifer Layden, director of the CDC's Office of Public Health Data, Surveillance and Technology.

"Public health has a responsibility to detect health threats or diseases that warrant immediate action ... to identify outbreaks and then work to investigate and shut down that outbreak," Layden said. And that, she continued, "relies on timely data."

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By Kaitlyn Levinson,
Assistant Editor, Route Fifty

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