SUMMARY

When someone is diagnosed with a communicable disease, such as tuberculosis, HIV or another sexually transmitted disease, health departments may be permitted or required by law to take action in order to prevent the disease from spreading. This interactive map identifies state laws and regulations that dictate how and to what extent a health department may intervene when communicable diseases appear in their jurisdiction, whether a health department may act on the suspicion of a communicable disease case, or whether they must have evidence, such as an official diagnosis from a doctor or other health care provider. This page also identifies whether the state or local health department is required to act, and what actions they are permitted to take when intervening.

ABOUT COMMUNICABLE DISEASE INTERVENTION LAWS & THE DATA

When someone is diagnosed with a communicable disease, such as tuberculosis, HIV or another sexually transmitted disease, health departments may be permitted or required by law to take action in order to prevent the disease from spreading. In some states, communicable disease diagnoses must be reported to a local or state health department, and those who have come into contact with the diagnosed patient are notified, tested, and treated. Sometimes, health departments can take these preventative acts when a patient is suspected to have a communicable disease, before the diagnosis is confirmed.

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have at least one law that discusses communicable disease intervention, but there is variation in a few key areas:

- The event that initiates a state’s ability to intervene, i.e., whether or not a case is suspected versus known
- The parties responsible for the intervention, i.e., state or local health departments
- Whether actions are required and/or permitted by law

To that end, the interactive map includes information on four main elements of these laws:

1. Whether a health department may act on the suspicion that a patient has a communicable disease, or whether the department must have evidence that the disease has been confirmed, such as an official diagnosis from a doctor or other health care provider.
2. The states where authorities are permitted or required by law to intervene specifically when sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are diagnosed.
3. Whether the state or local health departments are required to act when a disease is suspected or known.
4. What actions the health departments are permitted to take when intervening.

The data available here were last updated in July 2013.

NAVIGATING THE DATA

There are two ways to navigate the data by clicking the Filter tab or the Explore tab — for each option, the data can be visualized in a map and table format or in jurisdiction profiles.

Filter
The dataset homepage will default to the Filter tab. Here, users may answer a series of questions to learn more about the characteristics of the laws. Answering more than one question will show all the jurisdictions that meet the combined criteria. Criteria selected will be listed above the questions, and can be removed by clicking the white X or by clicking “Reset” above the questions.

Explore
Users can access Explore by clicking the Explore tab in the bar above the questions. Using Explore, users will see the answers to one question across all jurisdictions.

The primary questions in this dataset are:
1. Does the state law address communicable disease intervention?
2. What event initiates such an intervention?
3. Who is responsible for performing the intervention?
4. What are the required or permitted actions that a state government may take when intervening?

DISPLAYING THE RESULTS

There are two display modes once criteria have been selected by using either the Filter or Explore tab — Map display mode and Profiles display mode.

Map Display
LawAtlas.org dataset homepages default to the map display mode. When querying the data using the Filter tab, all jurisdictions that meet the criteria selected will display in one tone of yellow. Those jurisdictions that do not meet the criteria selected will be colored gray. When querying the data using the Explore tab, the map will illuminate with colors from yellow to red that are associated with the various answer choices (the color-coding is defined by the key to the left of the map).

Below the map, a table will appear. Using the Filter or Explore tab to navigate the questions will change the display:

- Using the Filter tab, you can select an unlimited number of criteria and the applicable jurisdictions that meet the combined criteria will be displayed in the table below.
- Using the Explore tab, you can isolate a single criterion and the applicable jurisdictions will appear in the table below.
Profiles Display
The Profiles display presents the results of the criteria selected in a text-based format for each applicable jurisdiction. Using the Filter tab, jurisdictions that meet the criteria selected will display. Using the Explore tab, jurisdictions that meet the criterion selected will display. If no criteria are selected, the full profiles for each state will appear under both Filter and Explore.

Profile Legend
Within each Profile box, above the questions and answers, there are additional options and information useful in exploring the law:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>§§</th>
<th>Toggle Legal Text</th>
<th>Selecting this option will show all the legal text used to answer questions for this jurisdiction.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toggle Full Place Profile</td>
<td>Selecting this option will show all questions and answers for this jurisdiction, regardless of what was selected using the Filter or Explore tabs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toggle Size</td>
<td>Selecting this option will make the profile larger, but will not change the information displayed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legal Text History – This interactive timeline displays when changes in the law have occurred within a jurisdiction. Using the arrows to the left or right, users may explore how the law has changed over time as new amendments to the law have been enacted. The timeline will change from gray to a shade of yellow when the jurisdiction passed its first relevant law. Each change in the law after that is marked by a break in the timeline.

Map and Profile Legend
There are a few symbols to be aware of in both Map and Profiles display modes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>§</th>
<th>Section Symbol</th>
<th>Clicking this symbol will open a window that displays excerpts from the law that correspond to the question and answer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>!</td>
<td>Caution Note</td>
<td>Clicking on this symbol will open a small window that displays text that describes important caveats about the question and answer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATASET RESOURCES
Each dataset homepage includes the following resources available for download:

- Data: The Data file exports in CSV format and may contain two tabs. The “Statistical Data” tab contains the legal variables coded in the dataset, displayed as values defined
in the accompanying Codebook. The “Summary Data” tab contains the legal variables coded in the dataset in text form, as well as the accompanying citations and any caution notes that may be included. Note: if there is only one tab available for download it will be the “Statistical Data” as described above.

- **Codebook:** The Codebook defines all of the coded variables in the dataset. The Codebook lists the question, question type, variable name, variable value and variable label. The Codebook should be used in conjunction with the Statistical Data extract.

- **Research Protocol:** The Research Protocol is a comprehensive document that outlines the entire methodology of the project, including the scope, inclusion and exclusion criteria, data collection methods, definitions, coding scheme decisions, as well as the quality control process.

- **Summary Report:** The Summary Report provides a snapshot of important findings from the dataset.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

This project is supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 93.283 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or NNPHI.

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