Text Illness Monitoring (T.I.M.)

Frequently Asked Questions

About T.I.M.

What is T.I.M.?

Text Illness Monitoring (T.I.M.) is a mobile texting tool that facilitates symptom monitoring during an infectious disease outbreak. Monitoring conducted by public health officials has traditionally been conducted via telephone calls, which can be a time-consuming process requiring staff resources. CDC has developed T.I.M., a nationally-centralized option utilizing two-way Short Message Service (SMS)/text messaging to aid in the process. Text messaging is an efficient method to elicit, manage, and act on any coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) symptoms among those who are exposed or potentially exposed to the virus. The T.I.M. system was utilized to monitor for influenza symptoms in Michigan[1] with success.

How is T.I.M. being used for the coronavirus disease 2019 response?

Use of T.I.M. is voluntary for health departments. Consenting persons in participating jurisdictions will receive 2-5 text messages a day for up to14 days asking if they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Health departments will immediately be alerted to any person in their jurisdiction that responds that they are experiencing symptoms and to any persons who fail to respond to two consecutive messages. Health departments would then follow up with individuals who are reporting symptoms or those that have been unresponsive.

Health Department Access

How do I get access to T.I.M.?

State and local public health departments may request access by sending an email to eocevent340@cdc.gov. Please provide a primary and secondary point of contact to act as an administrator in T.I.M. Instructions for adding users and assigning them to a campaign to receive notifications can be found in the "T.I.M. Adding a User and Alert Setup" guide available in the Resources section of T.I.M.

After registration, the public health administrators will receive an email with information on how to log in and access the system.

Can local public health jurisdictions use T.I.M.?

Yes, T.I.M. has recently been modified to allow county-level campaigns to be added under state campaigns. This allows for local use of T.I.M. for COVID-19 symptom monitoring. If a state would like to add county-level users in T.I.M., they should provide the names of the counties that should be activated. Once the T.I.M. support team activates these counties, states may then add county-level users as appropriate. Local jurisdictions will be assigned at the county level and will have access to the data for that county only. Local jurisdictions should coordinate with their state for access.

Who will be able to access the information in T.I.M.?

There are three levels of access to T.I.M.: CDC, state, and county. Public health administrators at the state level will have access to all data within their jurisdiction, including county level data. Local jurisdictions assigned at the county level

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1 Stewart RJ, Rossow J, Eckel S, et al. Text-Based Illness Monitoring for Detection of Novel Influenza A Virus Infections During an Influenza A (H3N2)v Virus Outbreak in Michigan, 2016: Surveillance and Survey. JMIR Public Health Surveill. 2019;5(2):e10842. Published 2019 Apr 26. doi:10.2196/10842 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6658270/

will only have access to the data for the county to which they are assigned. CDC will have access to the deidentified aggregate data for monitoring campaigns.

Can I add other people in my jurisdiction as users?

State users with the administrator role may add both state and county-level users for their state. County level users can add users to their assigned county only.

Dashboard and Notifications

Is there a dashboard and what information can be seen?

The T.I.M. system includes a dashboard with summary information on number of persons being monitored, and information related to the alerts/notifications that public health needs to take action on (i.e., those that reply YES to a text indicating symptoms, those that have not responded to two consecutive texts). Jurisdictions can view the mobile phone number of participating individuals being monitored through the T.I.M. system and the messages they sent.

How will I know if someone responds that they have symptoms?

If someone in your jurisdiction replies YES to a text message indicating symptoms you will receive an email notification. An email notification will also be sent if a person does not respond to two consecutive texts sent. You can also view a list of all users that responded they have symptoms on the dashboard and in reports.

What data is stored in T.I.M. for individuals being monitored?

Data stored in T.I.M. includes mobile phone number, any text message response provided by that mobile phone, and the date and time it was sent.

Are there any reports available in T.I.M.?

Yes. There are two reports in T.I.M. One report lists all of the text responses received from the previous day, with each response tied to a phone number. The other report lists all of the text responses received for the entire campaign, also tied to phone numbers. Both reports can be exported as a .csv or Excel file or can be reviewed and filtered using HTML.
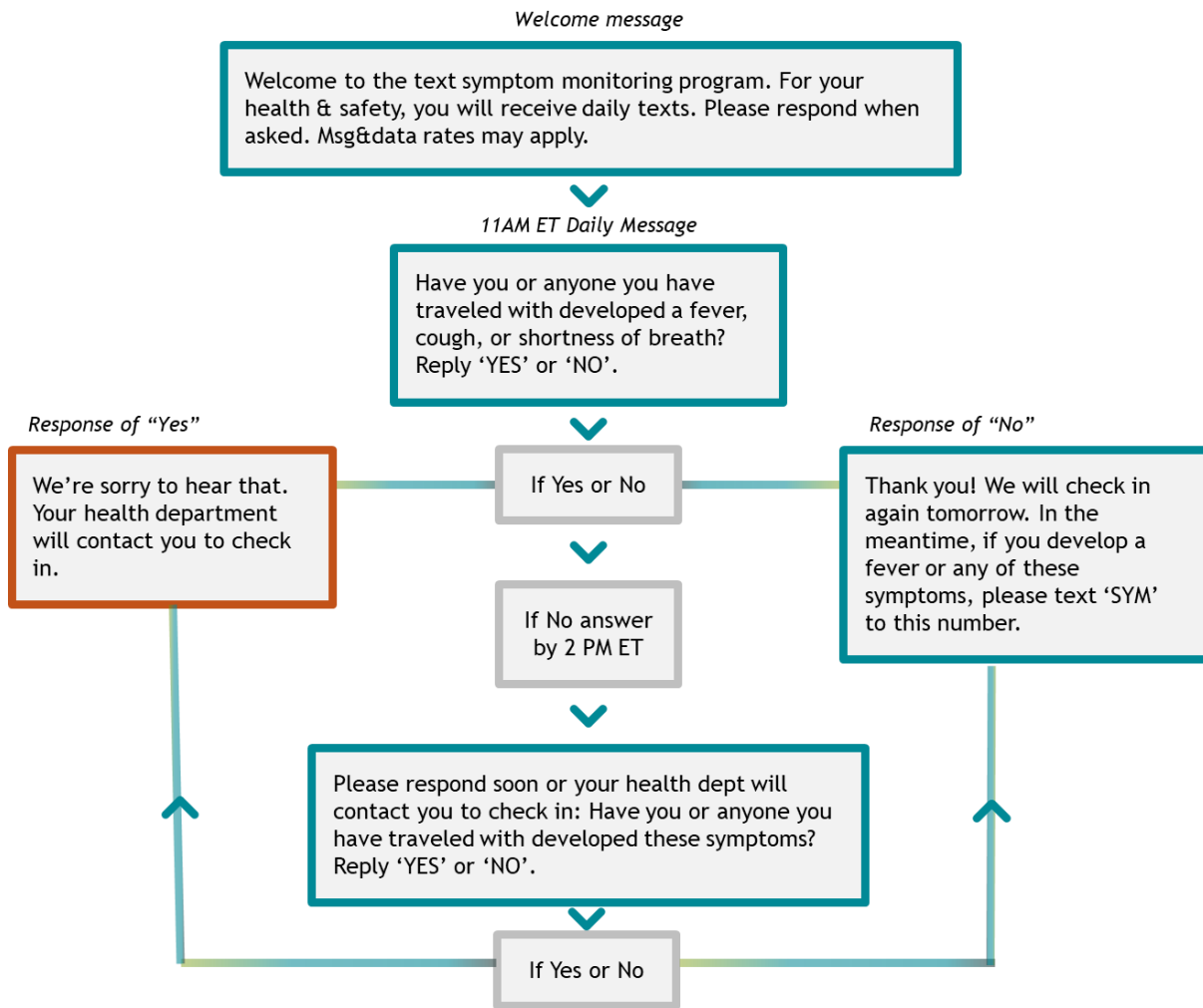
How are families or head of household tracked in the system?

Each mobile phone enrolled in T.I.M. represents one household or family unit. A text reply of 'YES' or 'SYM' indicates that at least one person in the household/family has developed symptoms. A text reply of 'NO' indicates that no one in the household/family has developed symptoms.

Enrollment and Messaging

What messages will individuals enrolled in T.I.M. receive?

A diagram of the 14-day text message workflow is below. Individuals will immediately receive a welcome message notifying them they have been enrolled in the text symptom monitoring program after the jurisdiction adds their mobile phone number to T.I.M. Individuals will receive a daily message to reply 'Yes' or 'No' to symptoms of COVID-19. At the end of the 14-day monitoring period, individuals will receive a final message informing them that they have completed monitoring and will be unenrolled from T.I.M.

Welcome message

Welcome to the text symptom monitoring program. For your health & safety, you will receive daily texts. Please respond when asked. Msg&data rates may apply.

11AM ET Daily Message

Have you or anyone you have traveled with developed a fever, cough, or shortness of breath? Reply 'YES' or 'NO'.

Response of "Yes"

We're sorry to hear that. Your health department will contact you to check in.

If Yes or No

Response of "No"

Thank you! We will check in again tomorrow. In the meantime, if you develop a fever or any of these symptoms, please text 'SYM' to this number.

If No answer by 2 PM ET

Please respond soon or your health dept will contact you to check in: Have you or anyone you have traveled with developed these symptoms? Reply 'YES' or 'NO'.

If Yes or No

Figure 1. T.I.M. message flow

What information is needed to enroll individuals in T.I.M. for monitoring?

The only information needed to enroll an individual in T.I.M. is a U.S. mobile phone number. This mobile phone number is the only identifiable piece of information entered into T.I.M. Other personal information linked to the patient phone number should be maintained by the jurisdiction to cross-reference with the phone numbers in T.I.M. for any required follow up.

Infrastructure

Is there a cost to jurisdictions to implement T.I.M.?

T.I.M. is a web-based system that does not require additional hardware or software. The system is available at no cost to jurisdictions.

How is the data in T.I.M. secured?

T.I.M. is a secure, scalable, applications in alignment with HIPAA and HITECH compliance requirements. Please see Compliant Campaign's infrastructure security and compliance document for additional details:

What are the terms and conditions for using T.I.M.?

Terms and conditions are available here: https://www.tim-health.com/terms/.

Other

Is there flexibility to change the duration of monitoring?

Monitoring for COVID-19 is for 14 days. If an individual does not want or need to be monitored for the full 14 days, they can text 'STOP' and they will no longer receive text messages from the system.

Can we remove or edit phone numbers entered into T.I.M.?

If a number is enrolled in T.I.M. and needs to be edited or an incorrect number needs to be removed, please contact timsupport@compliantcampaign.com.