



H I V / A I D S d a t a
a r e o n l y
u s e d f o r
p u b l i c h e a l t h
p u r p o s e s .

Good public health practice dictates that HIV/AIDS surveillance data are used only for the purposes for which they were collected. The following points highlight how confidential data are not used in Georgia.

- *Georgia does not release individual-level data from the HIV/AIDS Surveillance system unless required by a court order.*
- *Client information is never shared with insurance companies, employers, or landlords.*
- *A case report to HIV/AIDS Surveillance does not trigger a visit to a client from public health partner notification service personnel. A provider must request these services on the report form.*
- *When releasing aggregate data, Georgia does not release data with small numbers. Small numbers can sometimes be identifying to the individual.*
- *Georgia does not directly contact clients to complete case reports but rather depends on health care providers to provide us the data.*



N E E D M O R E
I N F O R M A T I O N A B O U T
H I V / A I D S R E P O R T I N G ?

If you need assistance with learning what to report or how to report, please contact the HIV/AIDS Epidemiology Section.

Phone: 1-800-827-9769 or 404-657-2600

E-mail: hivepi@dhr.state.ga.us

Or visit our website at
<http://health.state.ga.us/epi/hiv aids/index.asp>
hiv aids/index.asp



S a f e g u a r d i n g
a n d P r o t e c t i n g
C o n f i d e n t i a l
H I V / A I D S
I n f o r m a t i o n

*Confidentiality is always a
priority!*

CONFIDENTIAL

G E O R G I A D I V I S I O N O F
P U B L I C H E A L T H
H I V / A I D S E P I D E M I O L O G Y



H I V / A I D S S u r v e i l l a n c e

HIV/AIDS Surveillance activities monitor the HIV epidemic in Georgia and provide data that are critical to garnering and targeting the delivery of HIV prevention, care, and treatment. Georgia Division of Public Health is uniquely able to conduct these activities because of the expertise, statutory authority, and confidentiality protection of public health. However, HIV/AIDS Surveillance is the joint responsibility of many participants in the health care system.

The success of HIV/AIDS Surveillance relies on cooperation and shared trust between the public, health care providers, and public health. The key to maintaining this trust is Division of Public Health's appropriate use of the data and our ability to protect the confidentiality of persons in our database.

P r o t e c t i n g C o n f i d e n t i a l i t y

The Division of Public Health collects, stores, and uses HIV/AIDS information in a secure way which protects individual privacy and respects human rights. Georgia has legislation that specifically protects HIV/AIDS information (O.C.G.A. §24-9-40-1 and §24-9-47) as well as criminal penalties for anyone who intentionally releases data held by public health. Additionally, Georgia has instituted Security and Confidentiality Guidelines for HIV/AIDS Surveillance which are compliant with the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Technical Guidance for HIV/AIDS Surveillance Programs.

G e o r g i a ' s S e c u r i t y & C o n f i d e n t i a l i t y G u i d e l i n e s

Georgia has developed and instituted security and confidentiality guidelines for the collection, storage, and use of data collected for HIV/AIDS Surveillance. These include operational, electronic, and physical safeguards for protecting information. A few of the guidelines are highlighted below.

- Surveillance data are kept inside locked cabinets, in a locked room without windows.
- Only authorized staff who are trained on and adhere to strict security and confidentiality guidelines, have access to personal identifiers and confidential information.
- Passwords, codes, and keys that allow access to case report data are non-transferable and cannot be duplicated.



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F u r t h e r S e c u r i t y M e a s u r e s

- When patient information is discussed or accessed, it is done in a secure area where the information will not be overheard or seen by others.
- During field activities, staff carry the minimum amount of information required to complete a task and secure information in a locked briefcase or backpack.
- Computers workstations are always safeguarded and never left unattended while accessing confidential electronic information.
- When an electronic transfer of information is authorized, data are encrypted, password protected, and transferred using secure mechanisms.
- Mailings containing identifying information are sent exclusively to authorized recipients and marked "Confidential."
- Confidential information is irretrievably destroyed once it is no longer needed.
- Disposal of confidential materials is done in an irretrievable manner, including cross-cut shredding all paper documents and sanitizing electronic media.
- Confidential information is not faxed or e-mailed.