

# CORHIO and Biosurveillance

## What is CORHIO?

The Colorado Regional Health Information Organization (CORHIO) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to facilitate the electronic exchange of health information to improve the health and health care for all Coloradans. As a state-level organization, CORHIO serves as a collaborative partnership, engaging the public and private sectors as well as a broad range of individuals, organizations, agencies, and policy makers to develop and support a statewide health information exchange (HIE) network.

## How does CORHIO support Biosurveillance activities?

Biosurveillance is the process of looking for emergency room patterns that might indicate naturally occurring or bioterrorist acts. It is designed as an “early warning system” to help public health officials identify and respond to such acts as early as possible. Colorado implemented a biosurveillance system during the Democratic National Convention (DNC).

The Colorado Hospital Association, member hospitals in the Denver Metro and Colorado Springs regions, as well as local and state health officials encouraged hospitals to participate in the system. Following a model developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), staff at Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) built the analytic tools to implement the system using 11 different syndrome categories. Data were received, processed and reported daily for review by public health and hospital officials.

CORHIO was used as the secure biosurveillance portal for review by public health officials, hospitals and healthcare systems in the Denver Metro region. During the event, there were several minor “spikes” of syndromes (i.e., respiratory and meningitis) which were evaluated and found to be naturally occurring and consistent with typical seasonal patterns. Most importantly, the absence of any significant disease or syndrome spikes were reassuring to public health officials for maximal situational awareness.



## What did we build for the DNC?

Nearly \$100,000 was received to support this effort and build a separate secure CORHIO reporting environment that controlled web-based access while monitoring input/output and logging who accessed the report(s). Twenty (20) contributing hospitals could securely view daily community surveillance reports (see figure).

This one-time funding supported important infrastructure needs for many CORHIO's services. Public health and hospital officials will review the value of the system after September 2008 to determine if we will continue with these biosurveillance efforts. The infrastructure will remain with CORHIO.

Colorado's Biosurveillance System - 2008

