

Benjamin D. Schram, MPH

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Public health informatics and surveillance modernization leader with six years of experience managing statewide disease surveillance systems, interoperability initiatives, and public health technology strategy. Co-Chair of CSTE's Surveillance Policy Subcommittee, with a national network across state, local, and federal surveillance programs. Combines hands-on technical depth — Python, SQL, HL7/ELR integration, BI — with executive-level experience in IT governance, vendor procurement, and federal grant strategy (ELC, PHIG, Data Modernization Initiative). Deep understanding of how state and local health departments evaluate, fund, implement, and sustain surveillance technology and modernization initiatives.

CORE EXPERTISE

Surveillance & Interoperability: Electronic disease surveillance systems (Maven/NDEDSS), ELR onboarding & lab/clinic feeds, HL7 v2, FHIR, Rhapsody integration engine, eCR, reportable condition workflows, CDC nationally notifiable case reporting

Data Engineering & Analytics: Python, SQL, R, data warehouse/data lake design (Azure), ETL automation, Power BI, public data products & dashboards, data quality management

Leadership & Strategy: Team leadership & workforce development, application portfolio management, IT governance & project intake, procurement & vendor management, federal grants (ELC, PHIG, DMI) authorship & compliance, budget management

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director, Data Modernization Office

Nov 2023 – Present

North Dakota Department of Health & Human Services — Public Health Division

- Direct data modernization strategy, informatics, and data governance for the Public Health Division; lead a team of informatics and analytics staff and manage a budget funded through ELC, PHIG, and Data Modernization Initiative grants.
- Led North Dakota's surveillance modernization initiative through procurement, requirements development, vendor evaluation, and platform selection for the state's next-generation electronic disease surveillance system (go-live July 2026). Championed adoption of a next-generation architecture, positioning North Dakota as the inaugural implementation partner. Subsequently drove strategy to expand the platform beyond infectious disease into newborn screening, medicolegal death investigation, and other public health programs.
- Provide executive sponsorship for Public Health Systems Modernization Executive Steering Committee with oversight of modernization projects, and represent Public Health on the HHS-wide Intake Review Committee governing enterprise IT project intake, prioritization, and funding.
- Lead end-to-end procurement and vendor evaluation for public health information systems, translating complex agency requirements into clear, actionable vendor technical specifications to optimize statewide deployment.
- Established and maintain a division-wide application and data portfolio; assess lifecycle status, redundancy, and risk to drive sustain/modernize/retire decisions across the portfolio.
- Chair North Dakota's Data Modernization Advisory Committee and Data Stewardship and Governance Workgroup, convening division leadership and data stewards around shared data strategy and interoperability.
- Developed and coordinated Rhapsody integration routes supporting infectious disease surveillance, and non-infectious data collection programs.

Electronic Surveillance Systems Manager

Nov 2020 – Nov 2023

North Dakota Department of Health & Human Services — Disease Control & Forensic Pathology

- Owned statewide operations of the North Dakota Electronic Disease Surveillance System (Maven): ELR connections with reporting laboratories and clinics, data quality, report and workflow development, change requests, and vendor escalation, providing full lifecycle ownership of a statewide surveillance platform serving every reportable condition program.
- Designed and built, as sole developer, a Python automation pipeline integrating the Azure-based state data warehouse, Maven, Dynamics 365, and the immunization registry — eliminating ~3,000 analyst hours per year (~\$100K/yr) of manual overnight reporting work.
- Led the migration of COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing from a standalone Dynamics 365 system into Maven, designing new system features and workflows to support the transition at pandemic scale.
- Developed and maintained the state's public COVID-19 Power BI dashboard, public datasets, and ND Smart Restart metrics, coordinating with the Governor's Office, NDIT, and division leadership on transparent, data-informed reporting.

- Supervised epidemiologists, data quality, and surveillance staff, scaling the team to ~15 during peak pandemic response, and managed year-end case closeout for all conditions nationally reportable to CDC.
- Key author on ELC C1, C2, ED/EDX, and DMI2 grant applications and contributor to PHIG (A3), securing federal funding that sustains the division's surveillance and modernization portfolio.

West Nile Virus Surveillance Coordinator / COVID-19 Epidemiologist

Feb 2020 – Nov 2020

North Dakota Department of Health

- Built laboratory result reporting systems for mass COVID-19 testing events, including a self-service result retrieval platform, and co-developed the state's Dynamics 365 contact tracing application.
- Designed the SMART Restart county risk-level analysis and delivered weekly assessments and recommendations to the Governor's Office; served as epidemiology SME on the North Dakota University System COVID-19 Task Force.

Early Career

2018 – 2019

Pfizer (Epidemiology Research Associate, contract) · NYU College of Global Public Health (Adjunct Graduate Instructor; Research Assistant, SEARCH Program)

- Conducted a systematic review of obstetric outcomes following influenza vaccination in pregnancy (Pfizer); taught graduate epidemiology as an adjunct instructor at NYU.
- Co-authored a stroke epidemiology textbook chapter (Elsevier) and presented research at the International Stroke Conference.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP & RECOGNITION

- **Co-Chair, CSTE Surveillance Policy Subcommittee** — national leadership on surveillance policy across state, local, and territorial epidemiology programs (2024 – present).
- Panelist, CDC Resources for Core Surveillance Functionalities (RCSF) Panel (2026), the CDC/CSTE initiative defining core functionality requirements for reportable conditions surveillance systems; member, CDC STLT Minimum Data Necessary (MDN) Workgroup (2024), contributing the state perspective to national surveillance standards.
- Session moderator, abstract reviewer, workshop planner, CSTE Annual Conference (2023, 2024, 2025, 2026); Breakout Session Presenter, CSTE Annual Conference (2023); CSTE LEAD program participant (2023); CSTE Data Science Team Training participant (2022).
- Member, North Dakota State University Public Health Advisory Board (2023 – present).
- Telegraph Award for Excellence in Technology, North Dakota Department of Health (2022).

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Co-author, "Widespread SARS-CoV-2 Transmission Among Attendees at a Large Motorcycle Rally and their Contacts, 30 US Jurisdictions," *Clinical Infectious Diseases* (2021).
- Co-author, CDC MMWR: "Facility-Wide Testing for SARS-CoV-2 in Nursing Homes — Seven U.S. Jurisdictions" (2020).

EDUCATION

Master of Public Health, Epidemiology — New York University

2019

Epidemiology Excellence Award

B.S., Neuroscience & Psychology; Minor in Public Health — University of Minnesota

2016