

# Johns Hopkins to wind down its pandemic tracking dashboard

Johns Hopkins University & Medicine plans to cease its Coronavirus Resource Center’s (CRC) ongoing collection and reporting of COVID-19 data on March 10, 2023 — about three years after the institution embarked on the unprecedented effort of tracking an unfolding pandemic in near real time, according to the university’s website.

The service has operated since the novel coronavirus first began spreading globally in January 2020 to provide the public, journalists, and policymakers across the United States and around the world with visualizations of cases and deaths as they were being reported.

The comprehensive pandemic data will remain free and accessible to the public for all data that was reported between January 22, 2020 and March 10, 2023.

In addition, the interdisciplinary group of faculty and experts in data science, epidemiology, medicine, public health policy, and vaccinology that advised and led the CRC will continue to provide analysis and guidance about the world’s worst pandemic in a century.

The CRC initiative drew on the expertise and collaboration of researchers and faculty from across Johns Hopkins, including the Bloomberg School of Public Health, Whiting School of Engineering, Applied Physics Laboratory, School of Medicine, Sheridan Libraries, and the Bloomberg Center for Government Excellence.

The website was launched to meet an urgent need when governments lacked the capacity to mount comprehensive, real-time public health surveillance and reporting on the spread of SARS-CoV-2. The CRC’s U.S. and global data dashboards served as a model for states,



counties, and other nations to replicate as they were able to stand up public reporting of public health data.

“After three years of round-the-clock work building and maintaining a 24/7 global resource, we have reached the appropriate time to close this chapter of our response and look to other ways to keep the public safe and informed,” said Lauren Gardner, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering. “But if we’re needed again, we stand ready and willing to serve.”

When Gardner and her graduate student, Ensheng Dong, launched “the Hopkins map,” as it was popularly known, the Applied Physics Laboratory quickly stepped in to expand and scale the dashboard to meet intense global demand. The university then invested in the establishment of the full Coronavirus Resource Center, which launched on March 3, 2020, and added a U.S. county-level dashboard developed by the Bloomberg Center for Government Excellence. As the pandemic and public health responses evolved, the CRC expanded its data aggregation and

reporting capabilities to include data on testing, hospitalizations, contact tracing, vaccines, and public policy interventions.

Since the CRC’s launch, the website has reportedly been viewed more than 2.5 billion times, and users around the world generated more than 200 billion data requests.

The CRC was designed to provide aggregated, real-time global data reported at the federal, state, county, and tribal nation levels. Starting in 2021, however, U.S. states and counties began to consistently reduce the amount of publicly reported data — a shift that led the CRC in September 2022 to discontinue hourly reporting for testing and vaccine data. Since then, public reporting by states has continued to decline. As of January 2023, only New York, Arkansas, and Puerto Rico publish daily data for cases and deaths.

The federal government has significantly expanded its data tracking and reporting capacities, so CRC leaders are confident the public and policymakers will have ongoing access to trustworthy COVID-19 data and guidance from U.S.

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agencies.

Beth Blauer, associate vice provost for public sector innovation and CRC data lead, also noted that the widespread use of at-home rapid tests has significantly diminished the utility and accuracy of case data.

“The hospitalization data collected and reported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is now the most reliable and complete data remaining for use in public health decisions and policymaking,” Blauer said. “This is valuable, but insufficient to fully track and understand the pandemic; we are concerned about the persistent, across-the-board declines in the quality and availability of COVID-19 data.”

The Coronavirus Resource Center was listed among *TIME* magazine’s Top 100 Inventions for 2020. The team has also earned numerous academic accolades and awards from leading organizations.

To learn more, visit <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>.



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