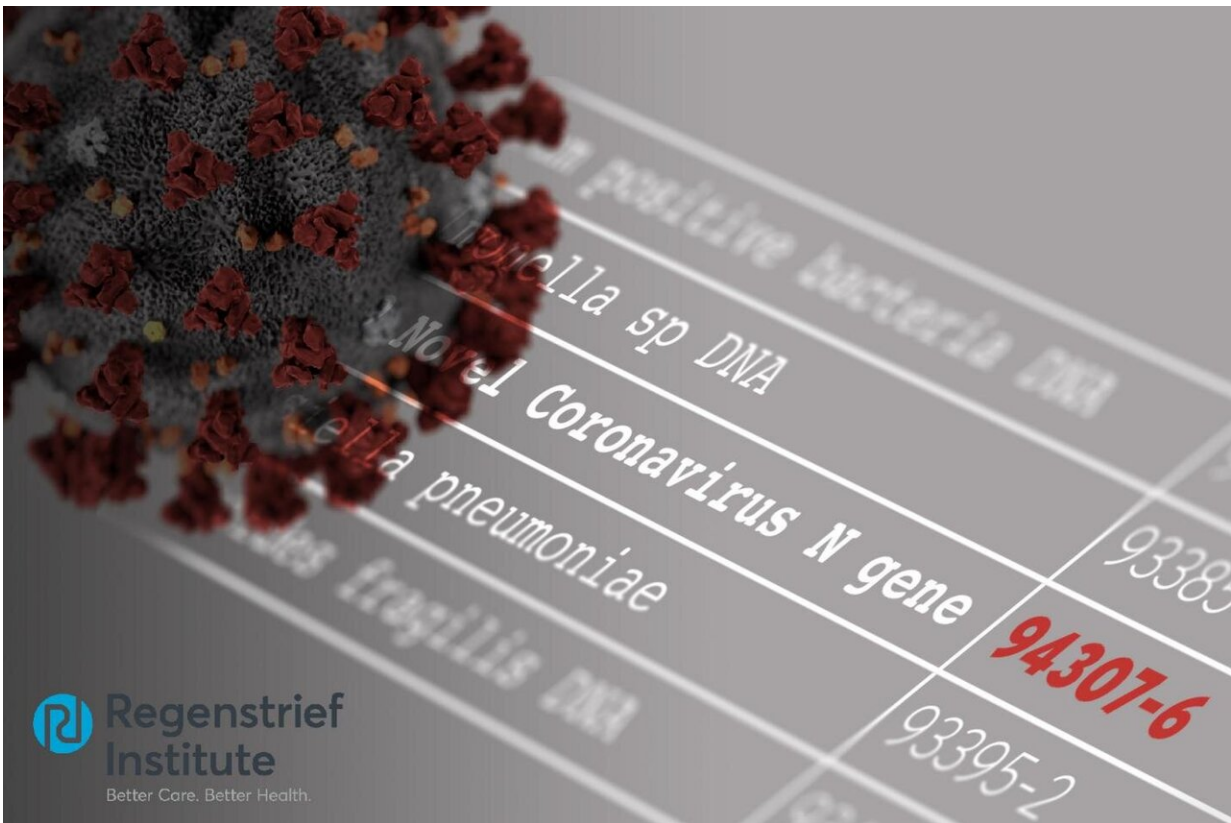


# Coronavirus surveillance: Team creating unique codes for disease tracking

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As public health leaders work to contain the spread of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, a team at Regenstrief Institute, an international leader in health information technology, is providing help to track cases of the illness. The team also created codes during the Zika and SARS outbreaks, among others. The codes are part of LOINC, a terminology system, created and maintained at Regenstrief, that is used in 176 countries. Credit: Regenstrief Institute

As public health leaders from around the world, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, work to contain the spread of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, a team at Regenstrief Institute, an international leader in health information technology, is providing help to track cases of the illness. The World Health Organization has declared the virus a global public health emergency.

The Regenstrief team is creating a series of codes to identify the lab tests used to screen patients for the [virus](#). The codes are part of a terminology system, created and maintained at Regenstrief, that is used around the world to identify laboratory and other health observations. The new codes will make it easier to track cases of the 2019 novel Coronavirus in the United States and across the globe. With more complete tracking, health leaders can study the virus and create strategies to address and contain the outbreak.

The team also created codes during the Zika and SARS outbreaks, among others.

"With novel viruses that appear to be easily transmittable, such as the coronavirus, it is vitally important that all identified cases be reported quickly for [public health](#) tracking," said Regenstrief Research Scientist Theresa Cullen, M.D., M.S., a global health expert who, through her work at Regenstrief, assists with leading efforts to create and administer the global system that tracks results. "These codes will facilitate the identification of cases, not just from system to system, but from health department to health department and even country to country."

The coronavirus was first identified in China. Thousands of people have gotten sick, and illnesses are being reported in a growing number of other countries including the United States.

The codes to identify 2019 Novel Coronavirus laboratory testing are part

of a universal coding system called Logical Observation Identifiers Names and Codes (LOINC), which was created at Regenstrief. The international system identifies health measurements, observations and documents. Health systems often have their own format for recording when someone is tested for or diagnosed with a virus or infection, which makes sharing and tracking information between systems difficult. LOINC uses standard terms, allowing data to be collected and facilitating interoperability. This is especially important when outbreaks of diseases occur.

Provided by Regenstrief Institute

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