State Auditor McGuiness Announces Creation of a National COVID-19 Data Quality Audit Template

DOVER, DELAWARE – Delaware State Auditor Kathy McGuiness today announced the creation of a national COVID-19 Data Quality Audit template developed as part of a multistate effort to review state COVID-19 data reporting and monitoring. The first-of-its-kind project to create an audit framework for states to follow was conceived through collaboration with fiscal watchdogs from five states – Delaware, Florida, Mississippi, Ohio and Pennsylvania – and with assistance from the National State Auditors Association.

"I saw variation in the reporting and monitoring of COVID-19 cases by states nationally and felt it was important to have a consistent tool for states to easily review and share information about how their state's approach to data use informs COVID-19 mitigation efforts," said **Delaware State Auditor McGuiness**. It's an issue every state is grappling with during this pandemic, and I'm proud to lead this effort toward a universal goal."

The other four states in the task force wanted a uniform instrument to assess the data used to guide states' virus responses.

"Florida values collaboration with other state auditors on topics of great importance, such as COVID-19 data reporting and monitoring. The audit template is an important tool that will facilitate the gathering and sharing of critical information," said **Florida Auditor General Sherrill Norman**.

"Americans need access to relevant, accurate data that they can trust and understand as they make decisions that impact their families. By adding consistency to the data gathering process and implementing best practices from across the nation, we can help provide clarity and confidence in the COVID-19 statistics that are being shared. Americans must be able to trust the data, so they can trust the resulting policies," said **Ohio Auditor of State Keith Faber**.

"Mississippi is proud to participate in knowledge sharing among auditors during this pandemic. It's more critical than ever that we collectively share best practices," said **State Auditor Shad White**.

"The goal is to help states increase the accuracy of data collection and interpretation, and to apply analytical techniques to improve our understanding of the pandemic's progression," said **Pennsylvania Auditor General Eugene DePasquale**. "By adopting a standardized approach to state-level reviews, we can help ensure consistency so that public health officials have access to the most reliable information."

Ten other fiscal watchdogs in Colorado, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Tennessee and three states requesting not to be named as well the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have expressed interest in using the template to take a closer look at their state's or territory's data. Results will be released once completed.

"Knowing the quality of the information states collect, report and monitor will go a long way in allowing policymakers and public health officials to improve their efforts to protect the public and limit virus spread," **McGuiness said**.

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