Quick Reference Guide to Alerting

This quick reference guide is intended for standard daily users and not super users. Therefore, it does not provide instructions on setting up templates or other implementation aspects. A user can create a new alert using an existing template or update an already created message, then issue the message to targeted groups via SMS, Email, and/or Web. This messaging application complies with the ***Common Alerting Protocol*** (CAP) global emergency messaging data standard. For more information on the CAP standard visit the URL: http://tinyurl.com/njgugt (CAP Cookbook).

Accessing the Messaging/Alerting Module

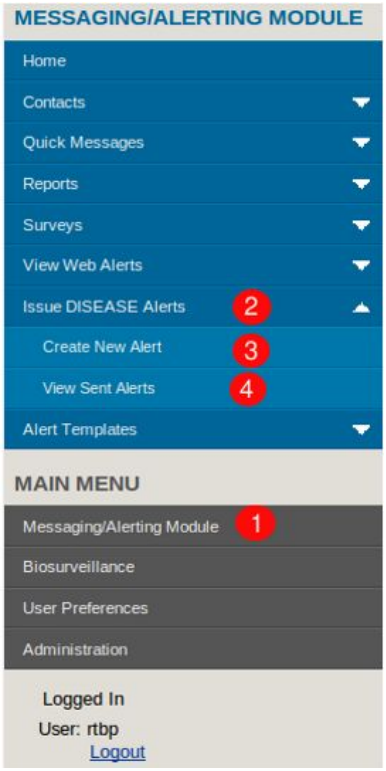

Figure 1: Menu

1. After accessing the **Real-Time Biosurveillance Program** web application through the URL (http://rs.rtbi-iitm.in/RTBPWeb/www/index.php) and completing the login process with the user name and password, you will be presented with the **MAIN MENU**. Click on the main menu item **Messaging/Alerting Module**. The menu will expand to show the full set of sub menus of the Messaging/Alerting Module.
2. Click on Issue DISEASE Alert to expand the menu to see all available functions.
3. Click Create New Alert to start generating a new alert
4. Click View Sent Alerts to view the list of all previously created and possibly issued messages (see *Figure 12*)

NOTE: The applications is set to timeout if it is in idle for more than 5 minutes. This is to prevent any unauthorized user from tampering with the application in case you forget to logout. Therefore, it is recommended that you have all information with you in relation to the alert you wish to issue before beginning the process.

Create New Alert

1. Click the radio button **CAP** (*Figure 2*); then enter a unique name to label (identify) the alert message, which will show in alerts list (*Figure 12*); thereafter, click the radio button: **Existing Alert Template**.
2. All values except the **Sender** text box will be populated with default values and you may leave them as is. In the **Sender** text box enter your email address.
3. Click **Next** to proceed.

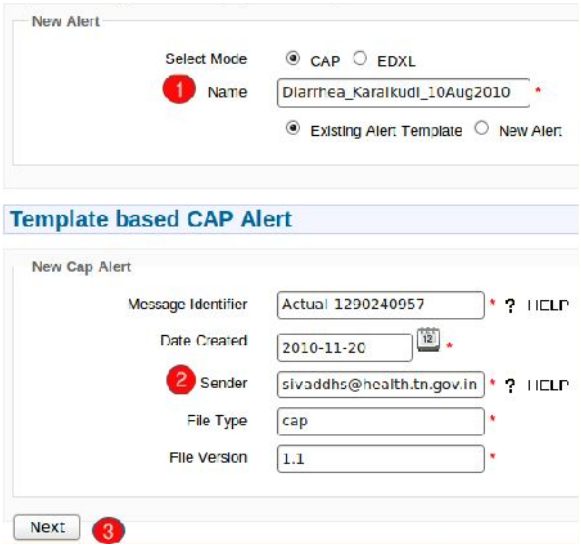

Figure 2: Create new alert with template

Template List

1. You will presented with all the predefined templates (*Figure 3*)

Figure 3: Template list

Notifiable disease action alert :: click if the disease is a ***notifiable disease*** (PS List) and you want the recipients to engage in r***esponse action*** for, which you would provide instructions (*Figure 5*).

Other communicable disease action alert :: click if disease is not a notifiable disease but another communicable disease and requires recipients of alert to engage in response actions.

Non Communicable disease awareness alert :: click if the disease is a non-communicable disease and you wish to make the recipients aware of the increasing trend of chronic diseases but do not require response actions; however, the recipients can be vigilant of the escalating situation.

Escalating Fever :: Click if there is an unusually increasing number of patients complaining of fever. This alert does not require the recipients to take any action but should be vigilant of new fever cases and report those to the IDSP immediately.

Top 5 WER :: Weekly Epidemiological Report is a template used to issue a report of the five diseases with the highest number of counts for that particular week. Recipients of this message are not required to take response actions but are informed of the health situation in their district or Block.

Alert tab

1. By default, after selecting the template, you are presented with the **Alert** entry form (*Figure 4*). The elements automatically populated based on the values set in the template.
2. The **Status** must be set to ***Actual*** – if you are issuing a real alert, ***Exercise*** – if you are conducting a drill or a training exercise. **Message Type** must be set to - (a) ***Alert***, if the message is issued for the first time or reissued without making any changes, (b) ***Update***, if message content was changed and is resent, and (c) ***Cancel***, if the message was wrongly sent or the threat has subsided or is

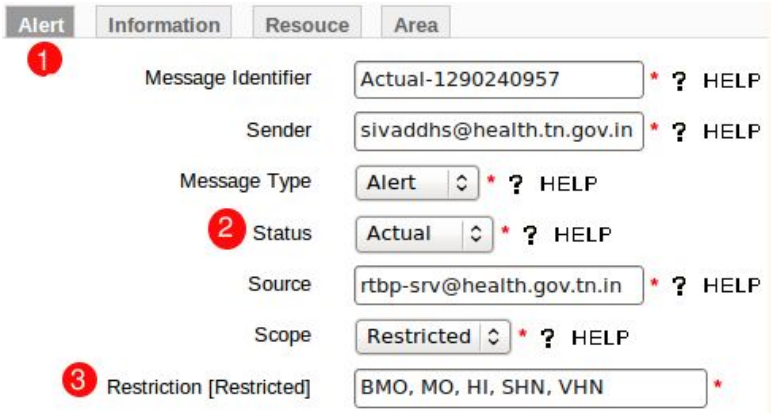

Figure 4: Alert elements

nonexistent.

3. Given that these alerts are not intended for the public and is only for healthcare workers and health officials, the **Scope** is set to ***Restricted*** and the **Restriction** values are set as per the template. You may add to or delete items in this text box to fit.

Information tab

1. Click on the **Information** tab (*Figure 5*); most values will be automatically filled based on the template predefined values.
2. Select the **Priority** level that is most appropriate; ***Urgent*** priority is set if immediate response actions are to be executed, ***High*** priority is set if response actions may be required for those in the vulnerable areas, and ***Low*** priority is set if no response action is required but the recipients of message must stay vigilant. Based on your select the **Urgency**, **Severity**, and **Certainty** values are automatically filled.
3. **Sender name** is usually the supervisor or decision maker who authorizes to issuing of the alert.
4. **Headline** is a human readable subject or sentence. The message creator must replace the terms ***[Disease]*** and ***[Area]*** with actual values. Example – *[Disease]* = *Diarrhea* and *[Area]* = *Thirupathur Block* would read the headline as "*Escalating Diarrhea in Thirupathur Block*".

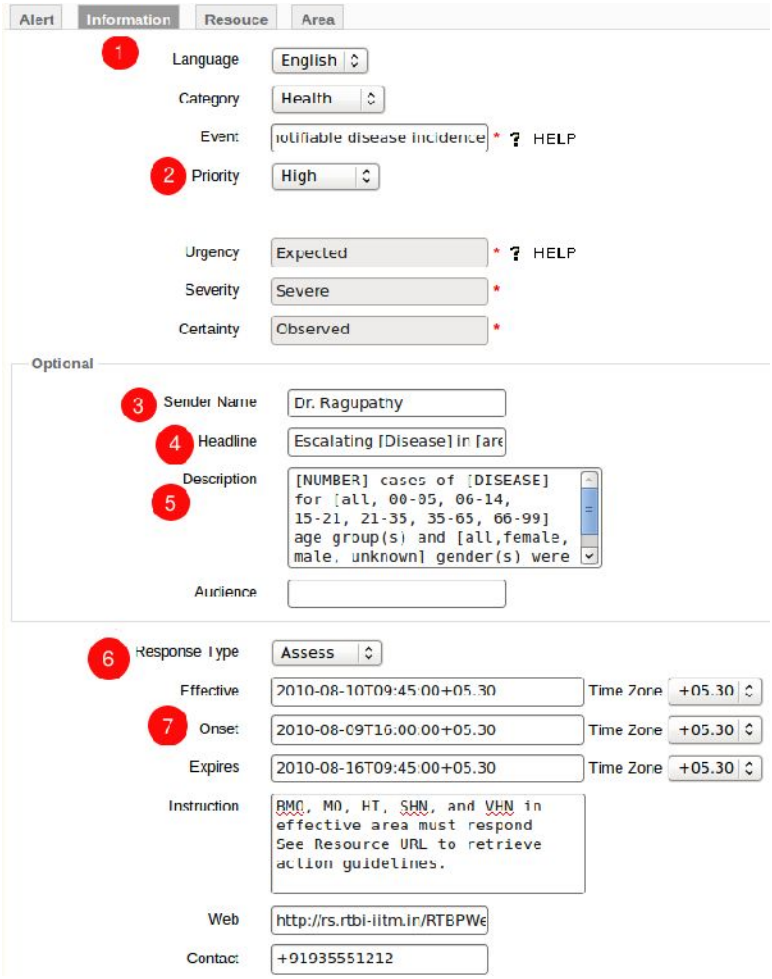

Figure 5: Information tab

5. **Description** is a full account of the incident. The terms **[*Number*]**, **[*Disease*]**, **[*Age Groups*]**, **[*Genders*]**, and **[*Area*]** must be replaced with actual values. Example [*Number*]=52, [*Disease*]=Diarrhea, [*Age Groups*]=00-15, [*Genders*]=all, and [*Area*]=Thirupathur Block would read the Description as "*52 cases of Diarrhea for age group 00-15 and all genders were reported in Thirupathur Block*".
6. **Response Type** must be select to a value that is most appropriate: ***Assess*** if recipients must visit the locations to investigate the reported cases, ***Monitor*** if recipients are to be vigilant and observe the situations, ***Execute*** if recipients must immediately carrying out the instructions provided to them such as quatanine, ***Prepare*** if recipients should get ready to execute response actions but not execute until ordered

to. This list none exhaustive and implementers may configure this list.

7. **Effective** date and time establishes the start period of the alert message, **Expires** establishes the end period of the alert message; thereby, limiting the alert to a particular time period and not internal. **Onset** is the date and time the first case of the disease incidence was detected.

Area tab

1. Click **Area tab** to define the location(s) the message is applicable to (*Figure 6*). For example, the Diarrhea outbreak may be in Thirupathur Block only but you wish to notify all other Blocks neighboring Thirupathur to make them aware of the health status in the area in order for them to be vigilant of similar cases.

Figure 6: Area tab

2. Select the value '***Health***' in the **Location Category**, Select the desired **Location Type**, and Start typing the name of the location in **Area Description**; the text box will predict and suggest the name of the location, then click or press ***<Enter>*** key to accept that value. Separate the list of locations by a comma.

Issuing an Alert

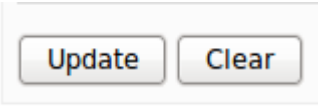

Figure 7: Update and Clear buttons

Click the **Update** button to save the new alert (*Figure 7*). You may click the button anytime during the message creation process. If you click the update half way through then you need to follow steps in section "***updating and resending alerts***" to recover the message to restart the editing.

Figure 8: Submission successful

Once the **Update** button is clicked, if all message creation requirements are met without errors, then you will see a message at the top of the screen frame as shown in *Figure 8*. Click on the hypertext link that says "Click Here to send the updated alert"; that will take you to screen in *Figure 9*.

Select Contact

1. Click on **Group** to expand the list, then click on name (e.g. VHN-Sevinipatti), which will include that group in the **Recipients List**.
2. The group identifier (e.g. **{xik1msg-210:VHN-Sevinipatti:team}**) will appear in the **Recipients List**. The software will

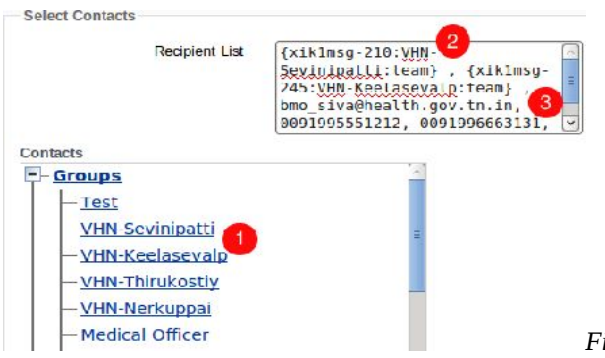

Figure 9: Select contacts

determine the respective email and mobile phones of all recipients in that group as defined when creating it (to create groups see *Figure 1* sub menu: Contacts).

3. Individual email addresses and mobile phones for SMS can be included as a comma separated list (e.g. ***0091995551212***, ***bmo_siva@health.gov.tn.in***). If the phone number is an international number it must prefix with 00, then country code and number (e.g. **0091**995551212).

Next -> Alert Type Click **Next - > Alert Type** button to proceed to next screen.

Select delivery type

1. **SMS** :: check the ***SMS*** box, if you wish to send a ***Short-Text-SMS*** to the recipients.
2. **Email** :: check the ***Email*** boxes to sen an email to the recipients. there are two options: (a) ***Short-Text-Email*** will send an email with short message with minimal information and (b) ***Long-Text-Email*** will send will send the short message as in (a) but include the full CAP XML file in the email as an attachment.
3. **Web** :: check the ***Web*** box to post a full CAP message on the website for recipients to view the full message, which would carry additional information such as the instructions.

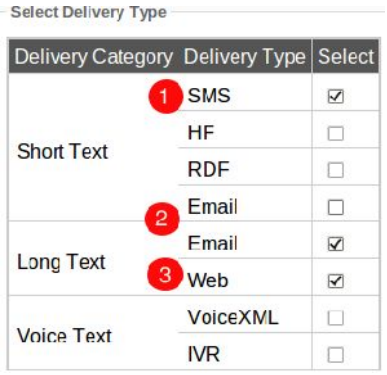

Figure 10: Delivery type

Next -> Transform Message Click **Next - > Transform Message** to proceed to the next screen.

Send Message

1. If ***Web*** was selected as a delivery type (*Figure 10)*, then this message will appear.
2. Final text boxes will present the SMS and Email message content as they would appear in those respective messages. This screen allows the user to verify and edit this content, if needed, before disseminating the messages.
3. Click **Send Message** button to disseminate the messages to the **Recipient List** (*Figure 9*) through the channels selected in the **Message Delivery Type**.

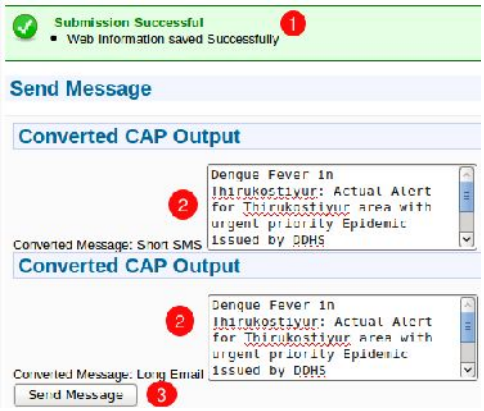

Figure 11: Send message

Updating and resending alert

This sections applies - (a) an alert message had been created but was not sent and you want to send it now (b) the alert message needs to be resent to a different set of recipients, (c)

wish to make some changes to an already issued message, then resend the message with the changed values as an ***update***, (d) to ***cancel*** a message that was issued as the threat no longer exists or message was wrongly created (refer section on **Alert tab** and paragraphs **2**.)

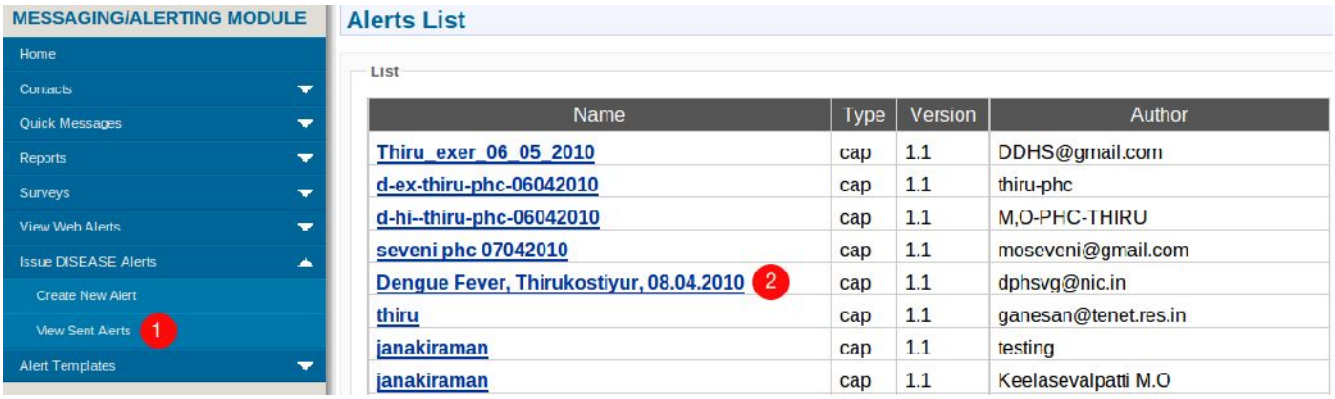

Figure 12: Alert list

1. Click View Sent Alerts to view the list of created alerts
2. Click on the name (e.g. Dengue Fever, Thirukostiyur, 08.04.2010) of the alert created to perform (a) – (d) described above, you will be presented with a screen like *Figure 13*.

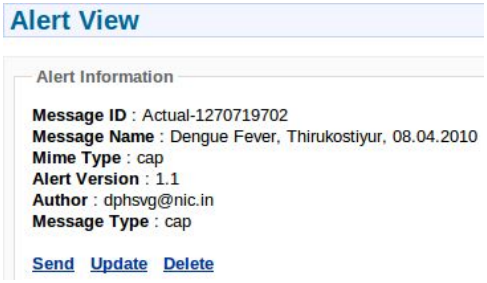

Figure 13: Alert view

Send :: click if you wish to resent the alert, without making any changes, to either the same set of recipients or a different set of recipients

Update :: click if you wish to make changes to the alert message before resending.

Delete :: click if you are absolutely certain that this message was a mistake and was not sent to anyone.

View Web Alerts

Figure 14: View recent alerts

1. In Messaging/Alerting Mdule menu click View Web Alerts to expand the sub menu, then click View Recent Alerts to view the most recently modified or issued alerts.
2. The list of alerts will be displayed in chronological order. Click on the hypertext link (e.g. **Dengue Fever in thirukostiyur, Thirukostiyur**) to view the full content of the alert message (see *Figure 15*).
3. Alert subscribers (recipients) may receive these messages via RSS such as through the *Google RSS Reader* that can be installed on a computer or mobile phone. Click on the orange RSS icon to proceed with this task of obtaining the RSS feed URL. The following screens will guide you through this process. Before, you subscribe to RSS feeds you must have installed an RSS reader on your computer of mobile phone.
4. The priority of the alert are color coded as Urgent, High, Low. This priority is based on what was assigned in the **Create New Alert** sections (see **Information tab** paragraph **2**, *Figure 5*)

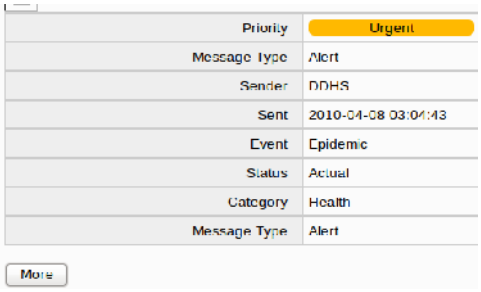

Figure 15: Summary of alert

First you are presented with a summary of the alert message, where the summary carries the mandatory information. Click on the **More** button to see the full CAP message.