



April 10, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Violence is a major public health problem. In 2017, more than 66,000 people died violently in the U.S., or seven deaths per hour. Approximately 47,173 people died by suicide. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death for Americans and the 2nd leading cause of death among persons aged 10-34 years. In 2017, a total of 19,510 people died by homicide, the 3rd leading cause of death that year among persons aged 15-34 years. The economic costs are staggering, with suicide costing the U.S. economy \$50.8 billion and homicide \$26.4 billion.

To advance prevention of violent deaths, our organizations support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).

NVDRS is a surveillance system funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and implemented by state and territorial health departments or their bona fide agents. The system is unique as it uses information primarily from three sources: death certificates (vital statistics), coroner/medical examiner reports (including toxicology reports) and law enforcement reports to provide states and communities a comprehensive picture of the circumstances surrounding violent deaths. NVDRS data are collected under federal security and confidentiality guidelines that govern surveillance activities. Since NVDRS data collection started in 2003, there have been no reported data breaches.

NVDRS informs efforts to develop interventions, guide a public health response, and secure additional resources for violence prevention. The success of the NVDRS depends on the support of data providers (vital statisticians, coroners, medical examiners and law enforcement officers) like you. Late last year, 10 new states joined the system and NVDRS is now funded in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Our goal is to see a nationwide NVDRS program that provides a complete picture of violent deaths across the U.S.

NVDRS is supported by many partners, including the American Public Health Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriff's Association, the National Association of Medical Examiners, and the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems. We invite you to visit CDC's website at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nvdrs/index.html> for additional details.

Together, we can gather information to answer the challenging questions about the preventable characteristics of violent deaths to help create safer and healthier communities.



The National  
Association of  
Medical Examiners

**NAPHSIS**  
Protecting Personal Identity  
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