



Dear Colleagues,

Violence is a major public health problem. In 2015, over 61,000 people died violently in the U.S., which is seven people dying each hour. Approximately 44,193 people died by suicide. Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for Americans and the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death among persons aged 25-34 years. A total of 17,793 people died by homicide, and it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death 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 help find answers to prevent violent deaths, our organizations support the CDC National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).

NVDRS is a surveillance system funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and carried out 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 the same federal security and confidentiality guidelines that govern surveillance activities and no personally identifying information is collected in the NVDRS.

The NVDRS can further efforts to inform, tailor, 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. This comprehensive system has been in existence since 2003, and 40 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico currently participate. Our goal is to see a nationwide NVDRS program that provides nationally representative data to provide 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 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.

