National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) 
History and Overview

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History of NVDRS

1999: Institute of Medicine report cited the need for a national fatal intentional injury surveillance system

2000: National Violent Injury Statistics System (NVISS) piloted at 12 sites, mostly universities

2000: Meeting with Harvard and the Joyce Foundation to suggest that CDC direct a publicly funded system

2000: CDC begins planning

2002: First appropriation from Congress for NVDRS

2003: NVDRS data collection begins with six states

2004 - 2014: More states added

2016: Funding for additional expansion
The Need for NVDRS

- Ongoing surveillance needed to monitor violent deaths and to support planning and evaluation for prevention

- Information on violent deaths contained in multiple sources
  - Death certificates
  - Coroner/medical examiner reports (including toxicology reports)
  - Law enforcement reports

- Information collected at state, county, and city level
The Need for NVDRS

- Information not integrated, standardized, or focused on prevention
  - Suicide – Limited to counts and demographic descriptions
  - Homicide – Limited to law enforcement information or death certificates

- Results in incomplete and fragmented descriptions of violent deaths; we need the full picture

- NVDRS combines multiple sources to get the full picture (e.g., information about victims, suspects, circumstances)
What is NVDRS?

- Active, ongoing state-based surveillance system
- Data collected by states through partnerships
- Information abstracted using a web-based application
- Provides comprehensive information on all violent deaths within participating states to fully characterize incidents
What is a Violent Death? (Conceptual Definition)

“A death that results from intentional use of force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community.”

Violent Death: Discussion

- Intent to use force or power, not necessarily intend to harm/kill
- “Physical force” and power interpreted broadly to include:
  - Use of drugs or poisons
  - Acts of neglect or omission by one person who has control over another (e.g., caregivers)
- Unintentional firearm deaths don’t meet this definition but included in NVDRS
Operational Definition for NVDRS Case Ascertainment

- Suicide
- Homicide
- Deaths of undetermined intent
- Unintentional firearm deaths
- Legal intervention (excluding executions)
- Deaths due to terrorism
Use of Definitions

- NVDRS case definition used to:
  - Collect manner of death information in a standardized way
  - Select cases for reporting at the national level
- States can use broader definitions to identify and collect non-NVDRS cases (e.g., unintentional drug overdoses)
  - Check “not an NVDRS case” in the Case Status field
Scope of NVDRS

Intentional Injury Deaths:
- Suicide (including terrorism)
- Homicide (including terrorism)
- Legal intervention (excluding legal executions)

Unintentional Injury Deaths

Deaths of Undetermined Intent

Unintentional Firearm Deaths

NVDRS

State Definition
NVDRS Data Sources

- **Primary required sources:**
  - Death certificates
  - Coroner or medical examiner (CME) reports (including toxicology) (have narratives)
  - Law enforcement (LE) reports (have narratives)

- **Secondary optional sources:**
  - Child Fatality Review (CFR) team data
  - Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Review team data
  - Crime lab data
  - Supplementary Homicide Reports
  - Hospital data
NVDRS Technical Assistance

- CDC provides technical assistance to VDRS participating states on all aspects of the system
  - Each VDRS state has an assigned Project Officer and a Science Officer
  - Implementation manual available
  - Monthly technical assistance calls with all states
  - Individual calls with states
  - NVDRS Help Desk
NVDRS Data Uses

- Inform communities
  - Documents circumstances of all violent deaths
  - Who, what, when, and where?
  - Insight as to why

- Guide and target violence prevention programs, policies, and practices
  - Support planning and implementation of activities at the local, state, and federal levels

- Monitor and evaluate prevention programs and strategies
NVDRS: Moving Forward

- Identify creative ways to expand to a national system
- Enhance technical assistance to new and existing states
- Strengthen relationships with partners
- Improve system infrastructure
- Disseminate useful, actionable data
The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Thank You

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