

CTVDRS Advisory Board Minutes

Meeting 1/8/2020 9:30-11:30 AM at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Farmington, CT

Introduced new AB members:

Jay Lawrie – Asst. Professor Criminal Justice, Albertus Magnus College

Lisa Winjum – Executive Director, CT National Alliance for Mental Illness

Kevin Borrup, Associate Director, Injury Prevention Center at Connecticut Children's

New, but not present:

Bill Meier – Lieutenant, Vernon police department

Stephen Civitelli – Director of Health, Wallingford Health Department

Attendees: Andrea Duarte (CT DMHAS), Scott Newgass (CT SDE), James Gill (OCME), Daniel DePinto (CT DPH/CCADV), Dan Cargill (CCADV), Lisa Winjum (CT NAMI), Jay Lawrie (AMC), Kevin Borrup (IPC), Mike Makowski (CTVDRS/CT DPH), and Susan Logan (CTVDRS/CT DPH)

The CTVDRS Advisory Board also wants to wish a fond farewell to Garry Lapidus, the Director of the Injury Prevention Center, who is stepping down this month from his position at the IPC and as a member of the CTVDRS AB. We want to thank him for the many years of service, advice and encouragement that he provided to the Injury and Violence Prevention Office at DPH and to this Advisory Board.

Two main strategies in establishing a violent death reporting system in Connecticut

(1) Create partnerships/collaborations for sharing data

The Chief Medical Examiner's Office has been a reliable data partner. The Crime Analysis Unit at CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) provides Supplementary Homicide Reports and NIBRS data quarterly. And the CT DPH Office of Vital Records provides coded death certificate data.

CT Coalition against Domestic Violence has assisted in contracting retired law enforcement personnel to abstract data from all police departments on homicides, suicides, and homicides related to intimate partner violence. We've been able to start populating the Intimate Partner Module in NVDRS. CTVDRS staff and Injury Prevention staff are involved in the Domestic Violence Mortality Review and the Child Fatality Review.

We also have worked with the Office of the Child Advocate to share data on child fatalities.

The data collection of death certificate data will be much improved and more efficient when the Electronic Death Registry is up and running by late Spring, 2020.

(2) Data use for Violence Prevention:

CTVDRS staff have accomplished the following in the last five years (2014-2019):

- a) Been a strong partner with the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board (CTSAB) on active participation in the CTSAB, presenting data, active involvement in CTSAB subcommittees and developing a new and updated Suicide Prevention Plan for 2025;
- b) Provided and updated violent death data for the CT State Health Assessment 2025;
- c) Been active members of the Lethal Means Restriction Subcommittee of the CTSAB by providing suicide data to identify high risk areas across the state such as bridges, highway overpasses, railroad crossings, state parks, etc.

Dr. Lawrie – asked about violent death data by occupation. Do we look at police and suicide, Department of Corrections officers? Andrea Duarte responded that the CT DOC participates in the “Zero Suicide” program for suicide prevention which promotes self-care and EAP in Corrections, for both the staff and the inmates. The group discussed how to obtain a good estimate of the number of active and inactive police officers to calculate a suicide death rate for active and retired law enforcement personnel. Thoughts from the group were to use the state pension fund information to identify number of retired (and still living) police officers by municipality. Another suggestion was to benchmark an estimate year to year and use that for rates – use a random sample and use that to extrapolate a good estimate. Police Officer Standards and Training (POST-C) may have information on active sworn officers, but not for retirees.

Dr. Gill from the OCME is interested in updating and standardizing the drop down menu in the OCME case management system for Place of Injury. He would like to review the NVDRS place of injury terms. CTVDRS staff agreed to work with him on this.

UConn Health, Population Health Department, pulled together data and created the 2016 CTVDRS Annual Report and is working on the 2015-2017 CTVDRS Epidemiological Report. Will send draft documents to the CTVDRS AB.

New Grant Cycle: 9/1/2019 to 8/31/2022 (3 years)

Improving and building on relationships with data providers and prevention partners.

The primary goals in this grant period are to:

- Create new epidemiologic and annual reports and update existing reports and fact sheets;
- Disseminate these data and reports for widespread access to stakeholders;
- Continuously improve the quality, completeness, and depth of the data;
- Raise awareness of the availability of CTVDRS and NVDRS data for use by other agencies; universities, researchers, etc. Currently, 2015-2017 data are available via CT DPH requests;
- Educate and train, if necessary, data providers of NVDRS variables needed for surveillance.

Discussed high rates of suicide in Wallingford, Bristol, and Meriden that continue to be ranked higher than other towns in CT. Vernon has dropped lower in the ranked list.

Will continue work on the Intimate Partner Violence toolkit – for IPV-related homicide and near-deaths to assist law enforcement who are repeatedly exposed to these scenes (or new to this). Tools are needed for these kinds of investigations. The toolkit will have forms for the officers to fill out to make it easier to capture information in a comprehensive and standardized way. Will help with data surveillance and homicide/assault prevention. Plan to be completed by the end of April, 2020 and police and State's Attorneys will be trained on the tool May through July.

Lethality assessment already being used by officers at domestic violence incidents: 43,000 screens since the beginning of using this tool – see CTLAP.org

Also would like to better engage Project Longevity and Hartford Communities that Care. Need to discuss how we can support them, even financially. Contacts are Brent Peterkin, of Project Longevity and Andrew Woods from HHC.

Data questions: Are suicide rates climbing in young black males and females?

CT NAMI is interested in the impact of trauma from sexual violence. Celeste Jorge may have information on trauma and sexual violence from the CT School Health Survey (aka YRBS) and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

CTVDRS To-Dos:

- Send out a link to the occupational health white paper on opioid use and workplace injury.
- Send draft documents of the 2016 and 2015-2017 reports to AB.
- Send place of injury codes to OCME.
- Fulfill data request on suicide rates in young black males and females; and link Lisa Winjum with Celeste for statistics on sexual violence.
- Plan for a way/format to communicate about CTVDRS to state legislators. Possibility is to attend the suicide prevention advocacy days with the CT chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and state legislators in Connecticut in the spring/summer(?).
- Send out the December 2019 DPH/DMHAS suicide data press release to the AB.
- Attend the CT Chiefs of Police Annual Meeting in April.

Next meeting: To be determined, but will take place June/July 2020.