



Department
of Health

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA, Director

August 13, 2022

Judy Qualters, PhD, MPH
Director, Division of Injury Prevention
National Center for injury Prevention and Control
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
jxq1@cdc.gov

RE: Request for Assistance

Dear Dr. Qualters,

In April, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) was contacted by our partners at the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services regarding possible increases in suicide deaths in several Ohio counties for the first quarter of 2022. These counties included Butler, Richland, Cuyahoga, Shelby, Darke, and Miami.

ODH began conducting preliminary data analysis using two different data sources, mortality data and syndromic surveillance. Using preliminary 2022 mortality data, ODH analyzed county- and state-level suicide deaths by month and quarter compared to finalized data from 2011-2020 to assess monthly and quarterly trends over time. Preliminary findings show that suicide deaths in Q1 of 2022 compared to Q1 of 2021 increased 550% (13 vs. 2) among Richland County residents, 67% (20 vs. 12) among Butler County residents, while Ohio increased 8% (438 vs. 405). Additionally, Ohio is a recipient of the CDC Emergency Department Surveillance of Nonfatal Suicide-Related Outcomes (ED-SNSRO) grant, and we have been able to monitor our syndromic surveillance data using the suspected suicide attempt (CDC suicide attempt V1) definition by county. Using the information provided by our partners and these data sources, we have worked to identify several additional counties that experienced increases in suicide deaths from Q4 2021 and Q1 2022, including Adams, Warren, Montgomery, and Summit. Using preliminary 2022 mortality data, ODH has continued to analyze suicide deaths by demographic (e.g., age, sex, race/ethnicity, race/ethnicity and sex, month of death) by select county and for Ohio. Data was pulled from 2011-2021 to provide context and comparison to 2022 to help identify if increases were occurring within certain subpopulations.

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The State of Ohio is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider of ADA Services.

We are requesting assistance from CDC to investigate this increase in suicide in Ohio that might include a variety of activities not yet defined, all of which will remain under the direction and supervision of the Ohio Department of Health. The State of Ohio will retain ownership of all data collected including any local data.

Thank you for the review of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kristen Dickerson".

Kristen Dickerson, PhD, MSN, MPH, RN, MLT (ASCP)
Chief, Bureau of Infectious Diseases
State Epidemiologist