

The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) and National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Collaboration Updates

The Terms of Clearance in the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) OMB (Control No: 0920-1128) Package states the following:

“NCIPC’s NVDRS and SUDORS programs will continue to collaborate with NCHS’ NCVS to share knowledge and optimize investments associated with collecting data from state CMEs. The goal of this collaboration is to a) reduce duplicative reporting of the same data by States to different components of CDC; b) to improve the quality and timeliness of CME data to CDC (e.g., by increasing electronic interoperability of CME case management systems and public health reporting systems); and c) to maximize the value of the data being reported.”

The Overdose Mortality Team (OMT), where the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) resides in the Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch (ESB) of the Division of Overdose Prevention (DOP), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is continuing collaborations with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), including the Collaborating Office of Medical Examiners and Coroners (COMEC), to share knowledge and optimize investments.

In response to this requirement, below is a summary of activities that occurred between NCIPC and NCHS for the period August 2022–December 2025 (including ongoing activities):

Ongoing: NCHS, SUDORS, and NVDRS staff participate in SUDORS/NVDRS and MDI Data Modernization Collaborative Discussions with the Georgia Tech Research Institute. The meetings include discussion of NCHS Review of “modernization” efforts related to medico-legal death investigation (MDI) data, including toxicology and review of FHIR based standards for death certificate data. Georgia Tech Research Institute present overviews of their work.

Ongoing: Dr. Julie O’Donnell (OMT Lead) and several OMT staff attend NCIPC and NCHS quarterly calls focused on drug overdose mortality, to share information about work being done in this area.

Ongoing: OMT prepares and updates an internal talking points document to accompany the monthly updates to the NCHS provisional drug overdose mortality data page, and provides the document to NCHS for review/awareness.

Ongoing: OMT provides updates on trainings and other opportunities for the medical examiner/coroner community to the COMEC monthly newsletters, stemming from work with Public Health Institutes (PHI) to strengthen medical examiner/coroner capacity to investigate and certify overdose deaths.

Ongoing: Dr. Julie O’Donnell (OMT Lead) participates in the NCHS Medicolegal Death Investigation Data Working Group (MDI-Data-WG).

Ongoing: DOP and NCHS collaborate to align categorization and naming practices for drugs and metabolites; prior to August 2025 this was done through both programs having IPA arrangements with Dr. Bruce Goldberger, a forensic toxicologist.

December 2025: Dr. Julie O'Donnell (OMT Lead), Dr. Maria Zlotorzynska (OMT Scientist) and Ms. Kim Miller (OMT Scientist) met with Ms. Carri Cottengim (NCHS/COMEC) and staff from the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to discuss potentially developing national standards for postmortem toxicology testing for violent deaths, suicides, and overdose deaths.

December 2025: Dr. Julie O'Donnell (OMT Lead) presented the updated SUDORS data dashboard (with newly-added final data for deaths that occurred during 2024) to the December COMEC webinar.

July 2025: Dr. Julie O'Donnell (OMT Lead) provided a report-out to NCHS of all medical examiner/coroner-related projects and activities ongoing within DOP.

July 2024: NVDRS, SUDORS, and NCHS colleagues from COMEC attended the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (IACME) Medicolegal Death Symposium. Dr. Lauren Tanz (OMT Senior Scientist) and Ms. Amanda Dinwiddie (OMT Scientist) presented on SUDORS, and all the programs gave presentations discussing their group's activities. The COMEC table at the meeting contained information about NVDRS and SUDORS.

July 2023: NVDRS, SUDORS, and NCHS colleagues from COMEC attended the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (IACME) Medicolegal Death Symposium. Dr. Lauren Tanz (OMT Senior Scientist) and Ms. Amanda Dinwiddie (OMT Scientist) presented on SUDORS, and all the programs gave presentations discussing their group's activities. The COMEC table at the meeting contained information about NVDRS and SUDORS.

May 2023: Dr. Christine Mattson (OMT Senior Scientist) presented during the May COMEC webinar on using fatal drug overdose data for prevention and response, providing an overview of, and data from, SUDORS.