



Cooperative Agreement Corner



Our Cooperative Agreement with the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS) supports activities for jurisdictions. Upcoming opportunities are provided below.

VSCP Directors Webinar

The VSCP Project Directors Webinar occurs on the second Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. Eastern. You can forward this invitation to others in your office who might be interested, however, you cannot forward your approved registration, as each attendee must register separately. The next VSCP Project Directors Webinar will be September 11, 2024, at 2 p.m. Eastern. [Register Here](#) to join the webinar.

Field Services Special Interest Group

What questions do you have regarding field services and data quality? Want to hear about best practices in training your providers? Do you need guidance on quality assurance programs? If so, the Field Services Interest Group monthly meetings can be a great resource. Hear from jurisdictions sharing their experiences and lessons learned in dealing with their internal and external partners on various field services, data quality improvement, and training topics. The next Field Services Interest Group will meet on September 24, 2024. Email hq@naphsis.org to join the monthly call.

Systems Special Interest Group

Come ask your technical peers about how they grapple with adjusting their vital records systems to meet the needs of vital records, data partners, and interoperability with other systems. The Systems Special Interest Group will meet at 3 p.m. Eastern on August 29, 2024, and again on September 26, 2024. Email systems@naphsis.org to join the monthly call.

Statistics Interest Group

NAPHSIS launched a new Statistics Interest group earlier this year. This group provides an opportunity to gather virtually each month to discuss topics of interest related to public health statistics. The Statistics Interest Group meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 11:00 a.m. Eastern. Please email hq@naphsis.org if you are interested in participating.

Birth Data Quality Workgroup (BDQW) and Fetal Death Subgroup

The BDQW meets on the first Thursday of every other month at 2:00 p.m. Eastern. There is also a Fetal Death subgroup that meets in the months the BDQW does not. If you are interested in assessing and improving the quality of vital statistics birth and fetal death data, contact NAPHSIS at hq@naphsis.org.

Collaborating Office of Medical Examiners and Coroners (COMEC)



The [Collaborating Office of Medical Examiners and Coroners](#) (COMEC) aims to strengthen ties between medical examiners and coroners (MEC) and public health, serve as a resource for MEC offices, and assist public health researchers and practitioners engaging with MEC. COMEC was established in 2022 at CDC in recognition of the important role of medicolegal death investigation (MDI). If you would like to receive monthly announcements from the COMEC, please email MDI@CDC.GOV.

Sharing Information about Death Certification

COMEC exhibited at the International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners (IACME)'s 2024 Training Symposium and presented an overview of COMEC and activities at a plenary to over 450 MDIs. COMEC staff also met with the IACME Board to discuss last year's accomplishments and to plan for future activities. COMEC will exhibit at the upcoming 2024 National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) Annual Meeting (September 19 – 23). Margaret Warner will also present on trends in mortality statistics and the importance of the quality and accuracy of death certificates. These activities will provide

information to hundreds of forensic pathologists and MDIs about death certification including standardization and timeliness of death certificate data.

COMEC Seminar Series

COMEC staff hosted their 3rd Virtual Seminar for 2024 which included guest speakers from MDI offices that are funded for data modernization projects. CDC Foundation shared [MDI Connect](#) progress and the MDI offices provided details of their modernization projects.

The next virtual seminar is on Tuesday, September 10th from 3:00-3:50 ET.

Title: The Use of Applied Forensic Epidemiology in Medical Examiner & Coroner Offices

Presenters: Abigail Grande, MPH and Sarah Lathrop, DVM, PhD-[Click here to register!](#)

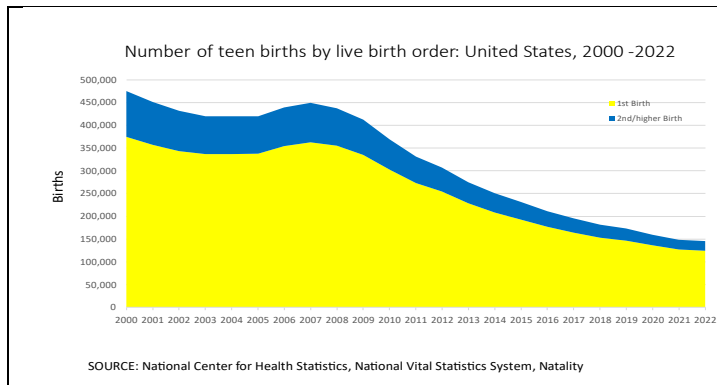
The following virtual seminar will be on Tuesday, November 12th at 3:00-3:50 ET.

Title: The Medicolegal Death Investigation Interagency Working Group: Insight into Federal Coordination and Examples of Activities that Support Death Investigators

Presenter: Lucas Zarwell, Director, Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences, National Institute of Justice-[Click here to register!](#)

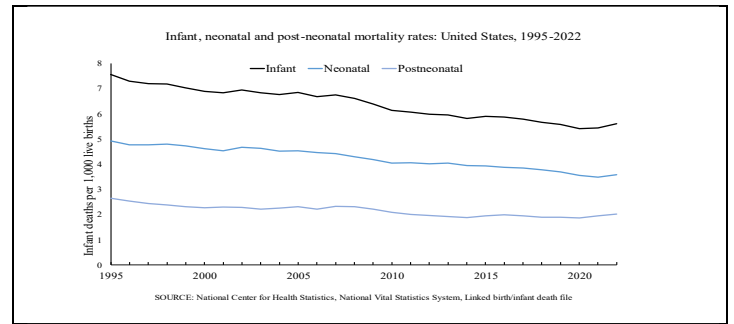
Notable Publications/Data Briefs

Changes in First and Second Births to U.S. Teenagers from 2000 to 2022



This report was published in July 2024 and can be found at this [link](#). The report shows that the number of first teen births declined 67% and the number of second and higher-order teen births declined 79% from 2000 to 2022 while the population of female teenagers increased 7%. First and second and higher-order teen birth rates declined 69% and 80%, respectively. Similar declines were found for each race and Hispanic-origin group.

Infant Mortality in the United States, 2022: Data From the Period Linked Birth/Infant Death File



This report was published in July 2024 and can be found at this [link](#). It shows a total of 20,577 infant deaths were reported in the United States in 2022, up 3% from 2021. The U.S. infant mortality rate was 5.61 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, a 3% increase from 2021. The neonatal mortality rate increased 3% from 3.49 in 2021 to 3.59 in 2022, and the postneonatal mortality rate increased 4% from 1.95 to 2.02. The overall infant mortality rate increased for infants of American Indian and Alaska Native non-Hispanic, White non-Hispanic, and Dominican women in 2022 compared with 2021; changes in rates for the other race and Hispanic-origin groups were not significant.

Vital Statistics Modernization Community of Practice



The NVSS [Modernization Community of Practice \(NVSS CoP\)](#) is a shared space for learning and innovation. It provides a forum for jurisdictions and their partners to collaborate on modernization.

Phase IV of the NVSS CoP Jurisdictional Outreach is now underway, representing another significant step in our collective journey. This phase, built on collaboration and shared responsibility, is focused on jurisdictions completing precertification.

We are thrilled to announce that the upcoming formal NCHS-organized testing event, a pivotal milestone in our journey, is set for September 9-10, 2024. This event marks an important step in our collective progress, and we encourage all stakeholders to mark this date in their calendars.

An astounding 57 Vital Records Offices (VROs) have participated in an NCHS-organized testing event as either observers or testers, which covers 100% participation. Jurisdictions are encouraged to consider becoming testers. If

a jurisdiction is not yet ready to test, they may still receive the opportunity to participate as an observer if we can preserve the observer role. To do so, we ask volunteers from vital records offices to share their screens with observing jurisdictions during the testing event. If you are willing to volunteer, please email nvssmodernization@cdc.gov.

In preparation for the event, it is crucial for observing and testing jurisdictional participants to ensure access to the NVSS API (test environment) through SAMS. This is an essential step toward the event's success. If you are not already in the process of getting access (or already have access based on past testing events), please reach out to nvssmodernization@cdc.gov and make the request. The individuals doing the hands-on testing are the intended recipients for API access.

Starting August 20th, NVSS will be dedicating CoP office hours to test preparation as we gear up for the NCHS-organized testing event in September. We encourage any jurisdiction starting/completing the FHIR mortality precertification steps 1 and 2 to continue this process during the testing event. DACEB will invite all jurisdictions to begin certification after they have validated their precertification data. It is also important to note that jurisdictions that have started pre-certification during testing events will still need to notify CoP of their start and end dates.

During the testing event, the NVSS CoP will also offer jurisdictions the ability to attempt the new natality flow, including enhancements made from the previous test plan. The first tier will focus on creating a valid FHIR birth record using the `vfdr.net` library available on NuGet. For this tier, jurisdictions use the canary tool for three test cases. A third test case has been added since June, testing the library and your system's ability to set known and unknown fields.

CTE announces the new releases to the VRDR .NET, VRDR Java, BFDR .NET, and Canary libraries. The latest changes target Vital Records Death Reporting (VRDR) IG STU 2.2.0, Vital Records Birth and Fetal Death Reporting (BFDR) IG 1.1.0, and Vital Records FHIR Messaging (VRFM) IG 1.0.1. The NVSS API has been updated to use VRDR .NET 4.2.2. Please update your libraries in preparation for the September 2024 testing event.

Last October, the NVSS COP began finalizing the formal certification process for the first cohort of vital records offices, which is the final step on the 6-Step Pathway to Modernization. Currently, 41 jurisdictions have enrolled for certification, a notable accomplishment. We urge any jurisdictions that still need to register to contact nvssmodernization@cdc.gov to have their names added to the list. Congratulations to Northern Marianas and Washington D.C for their hard work in reaching and completing this critical milestone and entering production with FHIR last month.

Jurisdictions are encouraged to continue informal testing using their API access between events, post questions to Zulip for technical assistance, and attend our weekly CoP Office Hours. The NVSS Modernization Community Practice SharePoint site contains all NVSS Main CoP meetings, technical support meeting recordings, and other resources and tools. Users can also access the certification and pre-certification documents by clicking the 'quick links' option.

We want to thank our technical partners, MITRE, Ruvos, NAPHSIS, and CTE, for their continuous collaboration in our modernization efforts. Their valuable contributions have been instrumental in the success of our recurring meetings and organized testing events. We greatly appreciate their support and look forward to continuing our partnership.

Vital Staff Spotlights

Jurisdictions may add as many names as they would like to our NCHS Newsletter mailing list! Just send a note to George Tolson at gct1@cdc.gov.

Fern Johnson-Clarke departed her position as VSCP Project Director in the District of Columbia.

Josef Gasimov was appointed VSCP Project Director in the District of Columbia.

Dana Moore departed her position as State Registrar in California.

Tomás Aragón was appointed State Registrar in California.

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