



## 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 November 13, 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 Field Services Interest Group meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 3 p.m. Eastern. Email [hq@naphsis.org](mailto: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 meets on the last Thursday of every month at 3 p.m. Eastern. Email [systems@naphsis.org](mailto:systems@naphsis.org) to join the monthly call.

### **Statistics Interest Group**

The Statistics Interest Group meets on the last Wednesday of every month at 2 p.m. Eastern. This is an opportunity to gather virtually each month to discuss topics of interest related to public health statistics. Please email us at [hq@naphsis.org](mailto:hq@naphsis.org) if you are interested in participating.

### **Birth Data Quality Workgroup (BDQW)**

The BDQW meets on the first Thursday of every other month at 2:00 p.m. Eastern. If you are interested in assessing and improving the quality of vital statistics birth data, contact NAPHSIS at [hq@naphsis.org](mailto:hq@naphsis.org).

### **VSCP and NDI Invoicing for 2023 Data**

Thank you for all your efforts in completing the 2023 data files. Now that the 2023 data files from the jurisdictions are complete, jurisdictions may submit invoices for any outstanding funds for the 2023 VSCP and 2023 NDI contracts and for any prior year outstanding funds, including any completed special projects funds. If you have any questions concerning invoices, please contact your assigned Vital Statistics Specialist.

### Vital Statistic 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 in the modernization space.

We are excited to announce that the upcoming formal testing event organized by NCHS will take place on December 2-3, 2024. This event signifies 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. We are now encouraging jurisdictions to consider becoming testers. If a jurisdiction is not yet ready to test, they still have the opportunity to participate as an observer if we can preserve the observer role. To do so, we need volunteers from vital records offices to share their screens with observing jurisdictions during the December testing event. Increased screen sharing is one of our most requested features at testing events, and your contribution is invaluable. If you are willing to volunteer, please email [nvssmodernization@cdc.gov](mailto:nvssmodernization@cdc.gov).

CTE will announce the new releases in November to the VRDR .NET, VRDR Java, BFDR .NET, and Canary libraries in preparation for the December 2024 testing event.

The Mortality FHIR pre-certification guidance has been published on the NVSS SharePoint site. The guidance was recently updated (May of 2024). This update did not represent a material change to the previous version but provided updates for better clarity and minor data issues. Due to the minor nature of the changes, in anticipation of the next quarterly testing event and moving forward, all jurisdictions are asked to use the updated (May 2024) version. This is just a reminder that pre-certification is a self-guided activity that jurisdictions

can initiate when they are ready. Jurisdictions are asked to notify the NVSS mailbox when they start and finish pre-certification for awareness and tracking. It is also important to note that jurisdictions that have started the pre-certification process during testing events will still need to notify CoP of your start and end dates.

Regardless of where a jurisdiction may be in the modernization process, valuable resources, including monthly meetings, focused subgroups, and modernization stories, are always available. The community prides itself on using peer-to-peer connections for multiple reasons, including to share announcements from jurisdictions that may interest the community. You will also find information about the

focused subgroups, such as the “EHRS to EDRS” and “funeral home interoperability” active subgroups, on the [NVSS SharePoint site](#), which can benefit jurisdictions that share those same activities.

The NVSS Community of Practice openly invites and encourages all jurisdictions to write and submit current articles and share any recent articles they may have shared ‘locally’ that encapsulate any modernization stories/lessons other jurisdictions may benefit from to the NVSS mailbox.

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.

#### [Collaborating Office of Medical Examiners and Coroners](#)



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. CDC established COMEC in 2022 in recognition of the important role of medicolegal death investigation (MDI) for public health. If you would like to receive the COMEC

monthly announcements, please email [MDI@CDC.GOV](mailto:MDI@CDC.GOV).

### New Resources for MEC Offices from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)

In recognition of the important data functions that occur in MEC offices, COMEC has supported CSTE which created the Forensic Epidemiology Workgroup or FEW. The group aims to better understand challenges and needs of applied forensic epidemiologists working in offices of MED in the U.S. The FEW members created resources for MEC offices which are available at [CSTE's FEW webpage](#).

CSTE is also pleased to announce the release of the Unexplained Respiratory Deaths Resource Repository! CSTE, in collaboration with CDC, funded sites from 2020-2024 to identify unexplained respiratory illness-related deaths occurring outside the healthcare setting. Participating sites included local and state health departments and MEC offices that developed and implemented protocols to identify and investigate unexplained respiratory deaths occurring outside the healthcare setting. [Click here](#) to access this resource repository.

### Upcoming COMEC Virtual Seminars

**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

**When:** 11/12/24 at 3:00-3:50pm ET [Register Here](#)

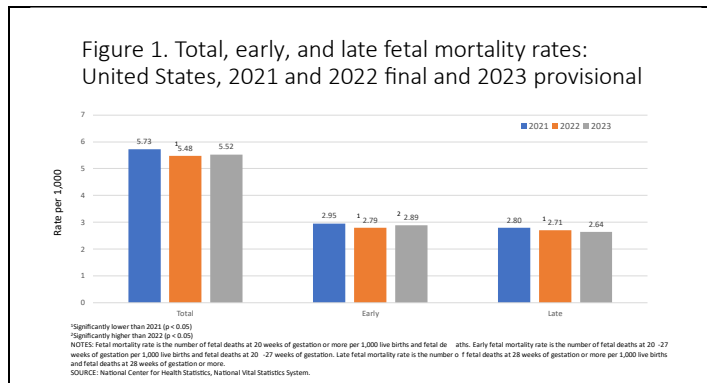
**Title:** Informing Drowning Prevention for Children and Youth through Death Scene Investigation and Child Death Review of Water-Related Incidents

**Presenter:** Shericka Harris, Health Scientist, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

**When:** 1/14/25 at 3:00-3:50 pm ET [Register Here](#)

### Notable Publications/Data Briefs

#### Fetal Mortality in the United States: Final 2021–2022 and 2022–Provisional 2023



This report was published in October 2024 and can be found at this [link](#). It shows that in 2023 the overall fetal mortality rate was 5.52 fetal deaths per 1,000 births and fetal deaths, not significantly different from the 2022 rate (5.48). From 2022 to 2023, the early fetal mortality rate (20–27 weeks of gestation) increased by 4% to 2.89 per 1,000, while the late fetal mortality rate (28 weeks of gestation or more) was essentially unchanged at 2.64 per 1,000. Among the race and Hispanic origin groups, the fetal mortality rate increased from 2022 to 2023 for Asian non-Hispanic women and was not significantly different for other groups. Fetal mortality rates increased in four states, declined in one state, and were not significantly different for 45 states and the District of Columbia from 2022 to 2023.

### 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](mailto:gct1@cdc.gov).

Zuheil Amorese Figueroa was appointed Acting State Registrar and Acting VSCP Project Director in Rhode Island.

[Click here for previous newsletter issues](#)