



Shancie Jenkins, Chief  
Office of Health Improvement and Wellness

Sunset Review Committee  
Director of Health's Advisory Group on Violent Deaths

February 23, 2016

Chairman Jordan and members of the Sunset Review Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Director of Health's Advisory Group on Violent Deaths. My name is Shancie Jenkins, and I am the Chief of the Office of Health Improvement and Wellness at the Ohio Department of Health.

The primary purpose of the advisory group is to advise on implementation of the Ohio Violent Death Reporting System (OH-VDRS), use of its data, and to provide recommendations for the prevention of violent deaths. OH-VDRS, established in 2009, is a reporting system that collects information from multiple sources to better understand the circumstances surrounding violent deaths, including homicide and suicide deaths. It is funded through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is part of the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS). The program is supported by federal funds and the federal grant requires ODH to maintain a stakeholder advisory committee.

The group existed informally, as a condition of the federal grant, prior to being codified in 2012. The group is comprised of coroners, medical examiners, law enforcement, public health officials, and injury and violence prevention professionals. The group currently meets two to four times per year and consults via regular email. The advisory group has 31 members who all operate on a volunteer basis.

The use of the Ohio Violent Death Reporting System is currently being expanded to collect unintentional drug overdose data, which will provide greater details on these deaths than what is currently reported on the death certificate. The OH-VDRS provides information from multiple data sources regarding circumstances and factors contributing to the death, rather than just key medical facts. The system is used to identify trends and risk factors associated with these deaths, and better data will help us identify additional prevention and intervention strategies as we continue to expand efforts to fight against opiate abuse.

ODH requests to reauthorize this group. However, should the advisory group be sunset, it would continue to meet as an informal body as a condition of the federal grant.

Thank you for your consideration, and at this time I am available to answer any questions you may have.