

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 4, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and  
Human Services and Education  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and  
Human Services and Education  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Senator Specter,

We write to request a set-aside of \$7.5 million within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Center for Injury Prevention and Control, for the expansion of the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).

Currently active in 17 states, the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) links data from public health, law enforcement, medical examiners and social service agencies to create a more complete picture of the circumstances surrounding violent death. Informed by the information gleaned from this data, states and communities are able to develop effective strategies to prevent violent death, including those caused by suicide, homicide, child abuse and domestic violence.

Each year, more than 50,000 Americans suffer violent death. Despite this staggering loss of life, most communities lack data about the circumstances of these deaths. Through its coordinated network of state-based surveillance systems, NVDRS enables participating states to collect uniform, detailed information about violent deaths – information that ultimately can be used to help save lives. NVDRS also enables states to better evaluate existing programs, thereby assuring the most efficient and effective use of violence and suicide prevention dollars.

While NVDRS is beginning to strengthen violence and suicide prevention efforts in the 17 participating states, many other states have been turned away due to funding shortfalls. The provision of \$7.5 million for NVDRS in FY 2008 will enable the system to expand to additional states and continue its incremental growth toward national implementation.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We believe that support for NVDRS is highly cost-effective and invaluable to the long-term success of local efforts to better understand, and ultimately reduce, violent death in our communities.

Sincerely,



Dick Durbin



Arlen Specter

Chris DeM

Ch. Sita

Herb Kohl

Joe Lick

Jack Leal

Amy Klobuchar

M. Z. J.

Debbie Stabenow

Olympian Jimmy