



# **THE NEW JERSEY VIOLENT DEATH REPORTING SYSTEM**

**LINKING DATA TO SAVE LIVES**

## ***The Problem: We don't know enough about why violence occurs.***

We know how many violent deaths occur nationally – nearly 50,000 each year – but current data systems do not capture enough detail about the circumstances surrounding these events. Because there is no comprehensive, linked, national reporting system we cannot answer basic questions such as: What proportion of victims of domestic violence attacks had restraining orders against their offenders? How many of those committing suicide had a diagnosed mental illness? What proportion of homicides are drug-related? Without knowing the answers, it is difficult for law enforcement, policy makers and public health professionals to develop effective prevention strategies.

## ***The Solution: The National Violent Death Reporting System***

The information is there. Data maintained by medical examiners, law enforcement, and vital statistics all contain crucial pieces of information about violent fatalities. Prior to NVDRS, these data systems were poorly integrated, limiting our knowledge about these events. The achievement of NVDRS is to create a centralized database that links all data about violent incidents from both public health and law enforcement sources.

## ***NVDRS is Working for New Jersey***

NVDRS data is already being put to good use in New Jersey. NJVDRS is working with the state's Office of the Child Advocate to increase knowledge about child fatalities. NJVDRS is collaborating with the Domestic Fatality Review Board to better understand murder-suicides among intimate partners. NJVDRS is also participating in the development of a statewide suicide prevention plan, and has convened experts to discuss gang violence in New Jersey.

## ***What People Are Saying About NVDRS.***

***"I support NJVDRS, as it will help us understand the violence that is most detrimental to Public Safety."***

Peter C. Harvey  
NJ Attorney General

## ***NVDRS Can Be Even More Effective***

NVDRS has the potential to be an even more effective tool. Since the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established NVDRS, in 2002, 17 states — UT, AK, CA, CO, GA, KY, MD, MA, NC, NJ, NM, OK, OR, RI, SC, VA and WI – have joined the program. Medical examiners, coroners, police officers, death certificate registrars, are combined with data from the National Center for Health Statistics and the FBI, are able to record pieces of the puzzle.

Unfortunately, we still lack basic information and the infrastructure necessary to prevent the 50,000 violent deaths that occur each year. With continued financial and technical support, a uniform system can provide the information necessary to reduce and prevent these deaths.