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HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECEIVES \$740,000 GRANT TO GATHER DATA TO HELP PREVENT VIOLENT DEATHS

HONOLULU -- The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) has received \$740,000 from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to gather critical data on homicide and suicide using the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) for five years.

NVDRS helps state and local officials understand when and how violent deaths occur by linking data from law enforcement, coroners and medical examiners, vital statistics, and crime laboratories. Using these data, public health practitioners and violence prevention professionals can develop tailored prevention and intervention efforts to reduce violent deaths.

"To prevent violent deaths, we must first understand all the facts," said DOH Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention chief Dr. Linda Rosen. "NVDRS will provide a more complete picture of homicides, suicides, and unintentional injuries from firearms in Hawaii. Better understanding of the circumstances of violent deaths may help identify prevention efforts that show promise to reduce these tragedies."

"We are appreciative of the strong support we received from the Medical Examiner of the City and County of Honolulu and the coroner physicians on the Neighbor Islands and look forward to working with their offices and the Police Departments of the respective counties to enhance violent death reporting in Hawaii," said Dr. Alvin Onaka, DOH state registrar of Vital Statistics and principal investigator for the NVDRS grant.

NVDRS provides details on demographics (age, income, education), method of injury, the relationship between the victim and the suspect, and information about circumstances such as depression, financial stressors, or relationship problems. It is the only data system for

homicide that collects information from sources outside of law enforcement and that has the capacity to link hospital and other health records.

“More than 55,000 Americans died because of homicide or suicide in 2011 -- that’s an average of more than six people dying a violent death every hour.” said Daniel M. Sosin, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.P., acting director of CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. “This is disheartening and we know many of these deaths can be prevented. Participating states will be better able to use state-level data to develop, implement, and evaluate prevention and intervention efforts to stop violent deaths.”

Hawaii’s use of NVDRS is part of CDC’s expansion of the system from 18 to 32 participating states. The 32 states participating in NVDRS include Alaska, Arizona*, Colorado, Connecticut*, Georgia, Hawaii*, Iowa*, Illinois*, Indiana*, Kansas*, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine*, Michigan, Minnesota*, North Carolina, New Hampshire*, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York*, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania*, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, Vermont*, Washington*, and Wisconsin.

*New states

For additional information about NVDRS, see www.cdc.gov/violencePrevention/NVDRS/index.html.

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