

Finding ways to prevent violent deaths in Iowa by understanding contributing circumstances.

Iowa Department of Public Health • University of Iowa Spring 2021

IAVDRS Newsletter

New Staff Update

Welcome to Wendy Ringgenberg, our new program abstractor! She joins us with a wealth of public health experience. Learn more about Wendy on our Staff Spotlight, page 3.

What Have We Been Doing?

In February and March, program staff were busy preparing the annual report and continuing grant application for Year 3 of the project. Highlights of successes from Year 2 and activities planned for Year 3 were presented to members of the IAVDRS Advisory Committee at their meeting in April.

Marlene has been busy getting all 2019 cases ready for close-out. Due to the pandemic, CDC extended close out from April 30 through June 30 for the 2019 deaths. By end of April, we had **83%** of our 2019 cases completed in the system. We are still hoping to obtain a few more LE records before June so we can increase our completion rate closer to **90%**!

Grant Activities Update

The program tracks requests and receipt of records used for the database, and reports this back to the CDC. The CDC sets some of the targets and we set others. The table below shows our targets, the percent of cases requested within the target, average # of days to receive reports and the percent of cases actually acquired within the time frame.

Program Targets for 2019	% Requested	Avg # days	% Acquired
100% of DC rcvd. w/in 120 days	99%	53 days	99%
75% ME req. w/in 90 days	66%	112 days	97%
50% of LE req. w/in 180 days	48%	341 days	74%
90% rcvd. w/in data closeout	83%	N/A	N/A
100% data completion	83.15%	N/A	N/A
88% of TA requests w/in 3 days	99%	N/A	N/A

Update on Cases in the System
As of May 18, 2021, there have been 731 deaths entered into the database for CY2020.

- ✓ 77% (561 cases) were suicides
- ✓ 15% (111 cases) were homicides
- ✓ 8% (55 cases) were undetermined

635 out of 648 cases for 2019 are complete in the system. There are 147 cases entered so far for 2021.



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July 21, 2021

IAVDRS Advisory Committee will hold a virtual meeting from 10 - 11:30 am. To participate, contact Lisa Roth (lisa-m-roth@uiowa.edu) or Binnie LeHew (vivian.lehew@idph.iowa.gov)

If you know of upcoming meetings or conferences where the IAVDRS could present or display materials, please let us know! You can reach out to Lisa Roth or Binnie LeHew and they will work to get something scheduled.

Grant Activities continued...

Through the end of the current grant year (8/31/2021), there are a few more activities planned:

- ✓ Staff participated in the annual “Reverse Site Visit” in early May, which was virtual again this year. The meeting offered important updates from CDC, allows us to share successes and challenges with other state programs, and stimulated ideas for improving Iowa’s VDRS.
- ✓ IAVDRS exhibited and spoke at the 2021 Police Chiefs’ Association Conference. We hope you learned a little more about our work and got to meet our new abstractor.
- ✓ The program is working with staff of the Iowa Domestic Abuse Death Review Team to prepare a data report this summer.
- ✓ We plan to do a four-year analysis of homicide data over the summer.

Our plans for Year 3 include issuing data quality reports to our data providers, doing a partner network analysis and getting Iowa’s VDRS data onto the IDPH Data Portal. We also expect to issue a few more special reports using data from 2016-2019.

SAVE THE DATE

**National Violent Death Reporting System National Conference, NVDRS: 20 years of Linking Data to Save Lives
May 17 - 19, 2022 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

This conference will include keynote addresses, scientific sessions, and networking opportunities to bolster collaboration. The scientific program will highlight: the value of linking data; how the data have been used to answer state-level questions about distribution and trends of violence among populations by geographic regions and over time. It will also elevate the importance of partnerships and collaboration to gain more comprehensive data and discuss how the data are being used to better understand violent deaths.



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Staff SPOTLIGHT!



Wendy Ringgenberg, PhD, MPH
Health Records Abstractor, IAVDRS

Wendy joined the University of Iowa in May 2021 as the IAVDRS Health Records Abstractor. In this role, she will continue Marlene Callahan's work abstracting data from health, legal, and public records for violent deaths here in Iowa. You can reach Wendy at wendy-ringgenberg@uiowa.edu.



Wendy Ringgenberg

Wendy most recently worked as a Certified Industrial Hygienist keeping people safe at work for the past ten years. Prior to field work, she was the Director of the Master of Public Health program at Des Moines University. She has also worked as a nursing home administrator and social worker. Wendy currently works on-call with the Polk County Crisis and Advocacy Services as a part-time advocate with the sexual assault response team where she responds to victims in need and participates in trainings for law enforcement.

Wendy has been a member of the Homicide Research Working Group since 2014 and chaired the Richard Block Award for outstanding student research for the past two years. She is a member and past president of the Iowa Public Health Association. She has been a member of the International Homicide Investigators Association as a student of criminal justice.

Wendy has published research on suicide and homicide trends in farmer and agriculture worker populations which started her on the journey of gathering and understanding violent death data.

She received her master's degree in Occupational and Environmental Health with an emphasis in Agriculture Safety and Health from the University of Iowa in 2014; Her master's in Public Health from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 2010;

A PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in 2006 and undergraduate degree in Social Work both from Iowa State University.

Wendy and Ray, her husband of 30(!) years, live on an acreage near Cambridge, Iowa. They have three grown children, two grandchildren, and four grandpuppies.

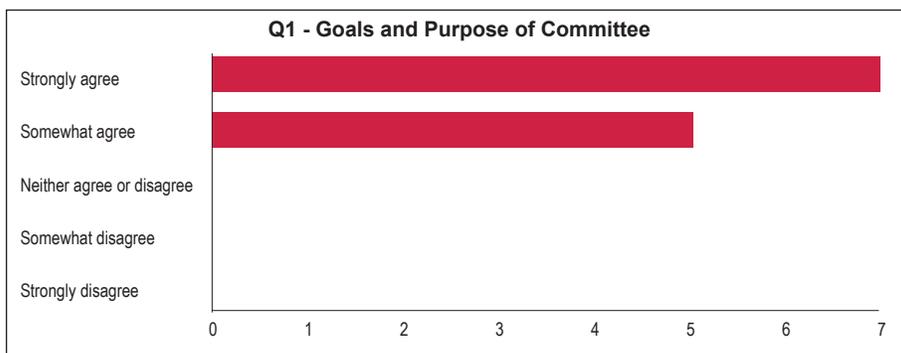
**IAVDRS Health Records
Abstractor Wendy Ringgenberg
can be contacted at
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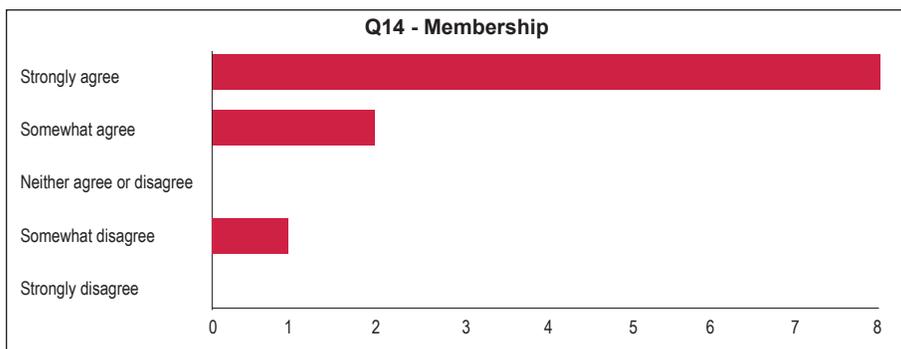
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Advisory Committee Survey Results

The IAVDRS Advisory Committee is one of the foundational elements of our project. Members have provided important guidance and input, in a collaborative spirit, since the initiation of Iowa's program in 2014. Having our advisory committee participate in the evaluation of our program is critical to our continued success. Between February and March, we solicited input from our advisory committee via an anonymous survey that included both Likert scale and open-ended questions. One of the key findings included strong agreement with the statement, "The feeling that we have a strong sense of purpose and shared understanding of our goals for the committee." (see graph, below).



Another key finding was a recognition that the IAVDRS team needs to continually revisit the membership of the committee to ensure that the talent and skills required to fulfill the purpose of the project are represented adequately. The responses to this question are illustrated in the graph below.



The IAVDRS Team appreciates the participation and engagement of our members to help improve the quality of our meetings and the utility of the information produced by the IAVDRS system. We look forward to sharing more in depth findings during our next quarterly meeting scheduled for July 21, 2021.

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When asked about our collaborative work one of the committee members replied:

"I like the diversity and expertise from all the committee members. I also think the goal to extrapolate objective data from violent deaths and suicides is extremely important in developing strategies to reduce suicide, drug overdose, and the need for deadly force by police. I am also hopeful that data analysis may lead to predictive tools to identify high risk victims and offenders in an effort to lower violent crime, suicide, and arrests."



Partnering Together



<http://www.idph.iowa.gov>

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA



<https://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/iprc/>



IOWA VIOLENT DEATH REPORTING SYSTEM

Office of Disability, Injury & Violence Prevention
Iowa Department of Public Health

515-322-6918

<https://idph.iowa.gov/disability-injury-violence-prevention/iaavdrs>