State Advocacy Engagement on Firearm Data Collection
Guidance for AAP Chapters

Political pressures on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have limited firearms research and data collection activities that could be construed as advocating or promoting gun control. However, the CDC is able to support related state surveillance through other projects. Child health advocates and other stakeholders are using these surveillance sources and other resources and strategies to inform public policy.

National Violent Death Reporting System
The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) is a state-based surveillance system, funded by the CDC, that links data from multiple state agencies including law enforcement, coroners and medical examiners, vital statistics, and crime laboratories to assist each participating state in targeting interventions. NVDRS data are used by state and local violence prevention practitioners to guide their programs and policies, to identify trends and patterns in violence, and help devise strategies for prevention. NVDRS includes data on firearm-related deaths.

- The majority of states coordinate NVDRS data through state health departments, though 2 states (Arizona and Kentucky) coordinate NVDRS data through state universities, and 1 state (Illinois) coordinates NVDRS data through Lurie Children’s Hospital.
- Ten (10) states (Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming) do not currently participate in the NVDRS.
- AAP Chapters in nonparticipating states can advocate for their states to join the NVDRS system to improve the available information on firearms related deaths and inform the development of related public policy.

State Child Death Review Data
Child Death Review (CDR) teams across the country at the state and local levels collect data and work to understand how and why children die in order to inform policy change and improve the lives, health, and safety of children.

- In addition to chapters drawing on local and state data, the National Center for the Review & Prevention of Child Deaths offers state child death review (CDR) profiles that include the number of homicides, suicides, and unintentional deaths due to firearms. The Child Death Review Case Reporting System (CRS) is a standardized case report tool available to states through the National Center for the Review and Prevention of Child Deaths. Forty-three (43) states now use it.
- A limit of data reported at this level is a suppression due to confidentiality constraints (fewer than 10 children) due to CDC and National Center for Health Statistics policy. These data may be more readily available via local and state CDR teams.
- Many state chapters have pediatricians involved in CDR, with some leading the effort. AAP chapters can utilize CDR data to identify the number of children killed by firearms in a state each year and inform policy changes.

Web-based Injury Statistic Query and Reporting System (WISQARS)

- The Web-based Injury Statistic Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) database, supported by CDC, is an interactive, online database that provides fatal and nonfatal injury, violent death, and cost of injury data.
- Researchers, the media, public health professionals, and the public use WISQARS data to learn more about the public health and economic burden associated with unintentional and violence-related injury in the US.

National Trauma Data Bank

- The American College of Surgeons National Trauma Data Bank also maintains an aggregate of trauma data, including firearms injury, from more than 700 trauma centers that be utilized to inform policy change.

Additional Data Collection Opportunities – Statewide Firearm Research Centers

- In 2016, California became the first state to create a statewide firearm research center via legislation. The California Firearm Research Center at University of California-Davis focuses on understanding the underlying causes of gun violence and how to prevent it.
- New Jersey Senate Bill 63 would establish a gun violence prevention research center at Rutgers University.

Need help navigating the complexities of firearms data in your state? Contact us—we can help!