National Vital Statistics System

Newsletter

Publication Edition – October 2026

Cooperative Agreement Corner



Our Cooperative Agreement with the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS) supports activities for jurisdictions. Upcoming opportunities are provided below.

VSCP Directors Webinar

The VSCP Project Directors Webinar occurs on the second Wednesday of each month at 2:00 PM ET. You can forward this invitation to others in your office who might be interested. However, you cannot forward your approved registration, as each attendee must register separately. The VSCP Directors Webinar for November has been cancelled due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

NAPHSIS Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars! The 2027 NAPHSIS Annual Meeting is heading to Anchorage, Alaska, May 17–19, 2027! Join us for three days of engaging sessions, valuable networking opportunities, and meaningful conversations with vital records and health statistics professionals from across the country. We can't wait to bring our community together in the Last Frontier for another exciting Annual Meeting! Stay tuned! Details on registration, accommodations, and the agenda will be coming soon.

NAPHSIS Special Interest Groups

NAPHSIS Special Interest Groups offer regular opportunities for members to connect with peers, share best practices, and collaborate on topics related to field services, systems, data quality, and public health statistics. Getting involved is easy. Email hq@naphsis.org to join these groups.

Groups and Meeting Schedules

Field Services Special Interest Group (FSIG) - meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 3:00 PM ET. The September meeting opened with key takeaways from the 2026 Statistics & Data Innovation Workshop in Virginia Beach. The group discussed a request for examples of statutory or policy language related to data sharing. Members were invited to submit relevant language from their jurisdictions for consideration. A significant discussion focused on the new NCHS geocoding guidelines. Participants raised questions about implementation, ongoing maintenance of geocoding files, potential changes to IJE data layouts, and the need for additional training. FSIG leadership agreed to compile member questions and work with NCHS to develop guidance and possible webinar opportunities. The open discussion centered on fetal death and stillbirth registration processes. Several jurisdictions shared their experiences, ranging from paper-based systems to fully electronic registration. Colorado reported near-complete electronic filing and discussed successes in improving fetal death reporting through training and workflow changes. Other states, including Oklahoma, Iowa, Vermont, and Minnesota, shared challenges and approaches for managing fetal death records.

Statistics Special Interest Group - meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 2:00 PM ET. The Statistics Special Interest Group (STIG) monthly meeting included a recap of the Statistics & Data Innovation Workshop, discussion on state laws and policies related to data sharing, and requests for resources to support implementation of the new NCHS geocoding guidelines. Members also discussed challenges associated with transitioning to the 2026 geographic coding standards, particularly how to address legacy geographic codes that map to multiple new codes when sufficient location detail is unavailable. The group shared implementation questions, lessons learned, and potential approaches for handling these coding and data quality issues. The meeting concluded with an open discussion and plans to continue conversations at the next monthly meeting scheduled on October 28, 2026.

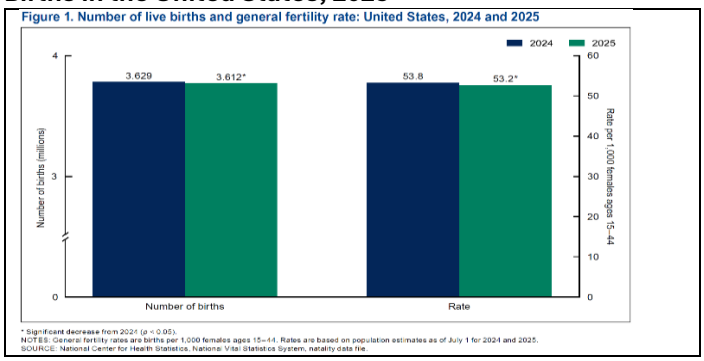
Systems Special Interest Group - meets on the last Thursday of each month at 3:00 PM ET. During the September Systems Special Interest Group (SSIG) meeting, there was a presentation from NYC's Jessica Borreli on their eVital User Enrollment with integration of the Certify app. There were discussions regarding the separate permissions, visibility, and enrollment of separate roles which include admins, data entry, certifiers, signers, etc.

Invoicing for 2025 VSCP and NDI Data

Thank you for all your efforts in completing the 2025 data files. Now that the 2025 data files from the jurisdictions are complete, jurisdictions may submit invoices for any outstanding funds for the 2025 VSCP and 2025 NDI contracts and for any prior year outstanding funds. If you have any questions concerning invoices, please contact your assigned Vital Statistics Specialist.

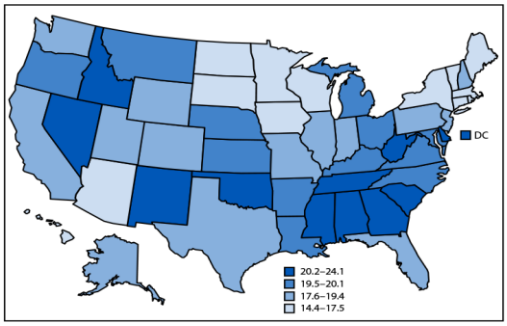
Notable Publications/Data Briefs/Presentations

Births in the United States, 2025



This report was released on October 21 can be found at **https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db571.pdf**. Findings from this report show that there were 3,612,012 births in the United States for 2025, a decrease of less than 1% from 2024. The general fertility rate was 53.2 births per 1,000 females ages 15–44 in 2025, a 1% decrease from 2024. From 2024 to 2025, birth rates decreased for females ages 10–29, increased for women ages 30–44, and were unchanged for women ages 45–49. In 2025, the percentage of mothers beginning prenatal care in the first trimester increased to 76.3%, with increases for all mothers younger than 40. The cesarean delivery rate did not change from 2024 to 2025 (32.4%), but the rate decreased for mothers ages 20–29.

Age-Adjusted Female Breast Cancer Death Rates, by State — United States, 2024



This report was released on October 15 and can be found at QuickStats: Age-Adjusted Female Breast Cancer Death Rates, by State — United States, 2024 | MMWR. Findings from this report show that in 2024, the age-adjusted rate of female breast cancer deaths in the United States was 18.7 per 100,000 females. DC had the highest breast cancer death rate (24.1), and Rhode Island had the lowest (14.4).

Surveillance for Violent Deaths — National Violent Death Reporting System, 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, 2023

This surveillance report was released on October 15 and can be found at Surveillance for Violent Deaths — National Violent Death Reporting System, 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, 2023. Findings from this report show that in 2023, approximately 23,000 persons died of homicide and 49,000 persons died of suicide in the United States, according to the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS). This report summarizes data from CDC's National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) on violent deaths and suicides that occurred in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) uses standardized death certificate data from the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) to track violent deaths. States use vital records to identify cases for inclusion in NVDRS. They then combine these data with coroner or medical examiner reports and law enforcement records to add details about the circumstances, mental health factors, and related stressors. Additionally, NVDRS staff access NVSS data through the Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) to support data analysis.

Maternal mortality update

The U.S. Standard Certificate of Death was revised in 2003 to include a checkbox for collecting information on pregnancy status in the year preceding death. Although the checkbox improved the identification of maternal deaths, there continued to be instances where medical certifiers marked the checkbox incorrectly, resulting in records being classified as maternal deaths when they were not. Several years ago, DVS began requesting that jurisdictions verify pregnancy checkbox information on certain death records, and this process has been very effective in identifying errors. The improvement to maternal mortality data quality that has resulted from this effort now allows public health officials to be confident that the programs and actions put into place to prevent maternal deaths are based on data that are as accurate as possible. The success of this project was recently featured on the NCHS website at Stories from the Modernization Community. Thanks to all of you for making this possible!

The Vital Statistics Modernization Community of Practice

October Updates from the NVSS Modernization Community of Practice

October updates include five jurisdictions completing mortality FHIR certification, a new SAMS FAQ for the NVSS Modernization Community of Practice, and expanded access to FHIR message tracking in the STEVE test environment.

Five Jurisdictions Complete Mortality FHIR Certification

Congratulations to *American Samoa, Arkansas, Florida, Oregon*, and *Texas* which recently completed NVSS mortality FHIR certification.

New Resource: SAMS FAQ
A new *SAMS FAQ for the NVSS Modernization Community of Practice* is now available on the NVSS Modernization CoP SharePoint site. The FAQ addresses common questions about the different types of Secure Access Management Services (SAMS) access used to support NVSS modernization activities. The SAMS FAQ can also be provided by email upon request. Contact **NVSSModernization@cdc.gov** to request a copy.

FHIR Message Tracking Available in STEVE Test
Following the successful beta testing during the September FHIR testing event, the FHIR message tracking feature in the STEVE test system is now available to all jurisdictions. The feature allows jurisdictions to track the status of FHIR messages in the STEVE test environment. If you have questions or would like more information about using this feature in the STEVE test environment, contact **support@steve.naphsis.us**.

One More Testing Opportunity in 2026
The final NCHS-hosted FHIR testing event of 2026 is scheduled for December 7–8. Additional information about registration will be shared with the community as the event approaches.

Stay Connected: CoP Recurring Meetings and Support
The NVSS Modernization CoP offers several recurring opportunities to hear updates, ask questions, share experiences, and collaborate with other jurisdictions and partners:

- **CoP Main Meeting** – Third Wednesday of each month, 3:00–4:30 PM ET.
- **Technical Subgroup Meeting** – Fourth Wednesday of each month, 1:00–2:30 PM ET.
- **Optional Weekly Office Hours** – Tuesdays, 4:00–5:00 PM ET.

Please note: the CoP Technical Subgroup Meetings will be canceled in November and December.

For technical questions and implementation discussions, jurisdictions and partners are encouraged to use the NVSS Modernization Zulip channels:

- **Death on FHIR:** https://chat.fhir.org/#narrow/channel/179301-Death-on-FHIR
- **Birth and Fetal Death on FHIR:** https://chat.fhir.org/#narrow/channel/434619-Birth-and-Fetal-Death-on-FHIR

These channels provide a forum for asking questions, reporting technical issues, reviewing past discussions, and collaborating with NCHS staff and other members of the vital records community.

For general questions, SharePoint access, or other assistance, contact **NVSSModernization@cdc.gov**.

Collaborating Office of Medical Examiners and Coroners (COMEC)

COMEC works to strengthen ties between medical examiners and coroners (MEC) and public health, serve as a resource for medicolegal death investigation (MDI) offices, and assist public health researchers and practitioners in engaging with MECs.

If you would like to receive COMEC's monthly email updates and an invitation to the seminar series, please email MDI@CDC.gov.

Modernizing Death Data to Serve the Living: Read about MDI Connect, a CDC Foundation initiative that helped New Mexico's Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) implement a new case management system that allows the office to search toxicology reports to identify overdose trends and track public health factors such as housing status or involvement of a motor vehicle in a death. Read the full article here.

Upcoming COMEC Virtual Seminars
The Seminar Series is designed for MEC, MDIs, medical certifiers, and related partners. In 2026 COMEC will have 6 seminars on the second Tuesday every other month and have ABMDI education credits available.

Title: Census of Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices
Presenter: Charlotte Lopez-Jauffret, PhD and Alexia Cooper, PhD, U.S. Department of Justice
When: 12/8/2026 at 3:00-4:00 PM ET.

2027 Seminar Series topics coming soon!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

What other topics would you like us to cover?
What parts of our newsletter do you find most useful?
Please respond to nchsnvssnews@cdc.gov

Click here for previous newsletter issues