



ACCESSING RECORDS

Telling Stories to Save Lives

October 2024 Office Hours



Key Funding Partner

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What to Expect Today

October Office Hours



COMMON SOURCES OF INFORMATION



Describe commonly used records for important information and access challenges.



ACCESSING INFORMATION IN CREATIVE WAYS



Discuss some creative ways to access information when challenges arise.



OPEN DISCUSSION



What else can we help you with today?

A young boy with short hair and glasses is smiling and leaning his head on his hand. He is wearing a grey sweater. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a window and a fireplace.

Fatality Review

Best Practice:

Examine case information from many sources for a broad ecological approach.

Birth and Death Certificates

AKA Vital Records



- Often provide critical information about decedent demographics, the childbearing parent, and cause of death.
- Birth certificates include valuable information for the review of infant deaths.
- Access to these records vary across programs.
 - Some states (e.g., Michigan) grant access to FIMR personnel to electronic birth and death records.
 - Some programs (e.g., Colorado) have a DSA or MOU with their state vital records office to always receive this information.

Death Investigation Records

**Law Enforcement, Coroner/Medical Examiner (ME), EMS, Fire,
Child Welfare**



- Including scene reports, interviews, and information on prior criminal activity.
- Can provide crucial information about the circumstances of the death. For example:
 - Law enforcement records often include firearm details.
 - Coroner/ME reports should include toxicology findings.
 - EMS records can shed light on treatment(s) delivered and if resuscitation was attempted.
 - Fire department reports for fire deaths include source of fire, type of building, presence of detectors, and building code violations.
 - SUIDIRFs, if completed, contain important information to understand SUID.



Hospital Records

For Previous Visits and the Death Incident

- Hospital records may include information about:
 - Hospitalizations (for child and childbearing parent).
 - Newborn care (including NICU stays).
 - Emergency department reports.
 - The death incident.
- Electronic health records contain demographics, progress notes, social worker notes, medical histories, diagnoses, medications, allergies, lab and test results, and immunization dates.
 - Social worker notes can be especially insightful about stressors experienced by the patient and/or family.


Provider Records

Sometimes Unaffiliated with a Hospital

- Can include information about:
 - Preconception care/prenatal care.
 - Postpartum care/pediatric records (well child and sick child visits).
 - Behavioral health care, including mental health and substance use treatment.
- Health information exchanges (HIE) can provide insight to drop-in health care visits that happen outside of the hospital and potential follow-up.
- Some states have a “referral hub” that shows efforts made to engage families in services, and whether those efforts were successful.



**Program Highlight:
Southern NJ Perinatal
Cooperative**

A series of colorful speech bubbles hanging from above, with the central one in focus. The bubbles are in various colors: purple, orange, blue, green, teal, and red. The central bubble is orange and contains the text.

**How have you successfully accessed
medical records? Do you request
specific aspects of the record instead of
the entire file?**

Local Public Health Records

Highlighting Services

- Public health records can highlight services a family was (or was not) receiving, such as: WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), home visiting, family planning, Children's Special Health Care.
- Consider looking for referrals, adequacies of services, or lack of services provided to a family.
- Home visiting records can illuminate important information about the state of a home, such as the presence of a safe sleep environment or working smoke detectors.



Child Protective Services/ Human Services Records

Highlighting Maltreatment History and Services



- Includes relevant child welfare information, assistance given, and services provided to the child and family.
- If possible, obtain records about the child welfare history of the caregiver(s) and supervisor.
- Provides important information about any human services action taken because of the death.



**Program Highlight:
Colorado's Child Fatality
Prevention System**

School Records

For School-Aged Children and Youth



- School-aged children spend a large part of their day at school.
- School records highlight what was going well at school and what may have been challenging (e.g., sports, clubs, academics).
- Includes possible problems (e.g., bullying, truancy, suspensions, behavioral).
- May include information about counseling delivered and referrals made for other services.
- Resources:
 - Building Relationships Between Fatality Review Teams and Schools ([guidance report](#) and [webinar](#)).

Other Records

Consider on a Case-by-Case Basis

- Information from court proceedings or other legal matters resulting from the death.
- Newborn screening results.
- Information on zoning or code inspections and violations (for deaths due to drowning or fire).
- Crash reports that include road and weather conditions, toxicology results from surviving drivers (for motor vehicle/transportation-related deaths).
- Any information on prior deaths of children in family, or any other sudden unexpected death in the family.
- Family/parental/survivor interviews.
- Medicaid records.




Common Challenges

When Accessing Records

- Partial records given with not enough information.
- Full records given with a lot of information to sift through.
- Legal barriers to accessing certain records.
- Delicate partner relationships to navigate.
- Confidentiality concerns.
- Needed records are from across state or county lines.





**Have you experienced challenges
obtaining certain records?
How did you overcome them?**

Information Sharing

Strategies to Consider

- Implement confidentiality and information sharing agreements with team members.
- Review legislation for confidentiality information, if applicable.
- When possible, consult your agency's legal team to discuss navigating policy and legislation.
- Document how records are being stored and used.




Getting Creative

When Challenges to Accessing Records Arise

- Develop one-off Data Sharing Agreements (DSA) or Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) or build on existing agreements.
- Build authentic relationships with the partners providing access to information, including members on your fatality review team.
- Utilize supplemental data sources.
 - Resource: [Consulting Population-Based Data to Inform Fetal and Infant Mortality Review and Community Action Decisions.](#)





**What other tips do you have about
accessing records and locating useful
information?**



OPEN DISCUSSION

How can we help you today?



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