



## 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.

### **NAPHSIS Annual Meeting - Call for Abstracts Open**

NAPHSIS is now accepting abstracts for oral and poster presentations for the 2026 NAPHSIS Annual Meeting. Have a project, idea, or success story to share? We invite you to submit an abstract that highlights advances in vital records operations, modernization efforts, registration and issuance systems, or innovative solutions to current public health challenges. The Annual Meeting is a key opportunity for leaders and practitioners to exchange ideas, showcase innovation, and share best practices across the field. Please submit your abstracts by March 2, 2026. [Submit your abstract](#)

### **VSCP Directors Webinar**

The VSCP Project Directors Webinar occurs on the second Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. Eastern. 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. In March, presentations will be shared on System Modernization presented by Lorraine Benjamin-Matthew, USVI and Highlights from the public release of the 2024 Final Mortality File, presented by Arialdi Miniño (NCHS). [Register Here](#) to join the webinar on March 11, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. Eastern.

### **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.

## **Groups and Meeting Schedules:**

**Field Services Special Interest Group** - The Field Services Interest Group meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month at 3:00 p.m. Eastern. The January 27, 2026, call highlighted Colorado's pilot continuing education course for funeral directors, strategies for improving prenatal care data reporting, and opportunities for future VSCP presentations. The group also promoted the upcoming Vital Records 101 training in Portland and shared resources and ideas.

**Systems Special Interest Group** - The Systems Special Interest Group meets on the last Thursday of every month at 3:00 p.m. Eastern. The January call focused on system priorities including interoperability with medical examiners, coroners, and birth facilities, direct data entry by birth parents, address autofill and geocoding, ad hoc reporting, online ordering systems, and emerging AI trends. Participants shared approaches and lessons learned across jurisdictions.

**Birth Data Quality Workgroup** – The BDQW meets on the first Thursday of every other month at 2:00 pm Eastern. On February 5, the Birth Data Quality Workgroup reviewed prior discussion on the attendant at birth field and nitrous oxide use, shared highlights from the Change in Maternal Syphilis Rate report and discussed the pending renewal of the NCHS birth e- Learning module, which is set to expire in June 2026. Jurisdictions were advised to plan for a potential lapse while awaiting CDC approval.

**Statistics Special Interest Group** - The Statistics Special Interest Group meets on the last Wednesday of every month at 2:00 p.m. Eastern. This is an opportunity to gather virtually each month to discuss topics of interest related to public health statistics.

Getting involved is easy. Email [hq@naphsis.org](mailto:hq@naphsis.org) to join these groups.

### **2025 Data Year Close-Out**

The following table includes the 2025 contract closeout and draft 2025 file release dates. Note that to include a jurisdiction's most current information in the file release, all corrections and final file deliverables are due no later than the target dates listed. The target dates are highlighted in red, as are the contract closeout dates and the dates for final updates.

The dates for final updates are subject to change and may be earlier, depending on the quality of the national file. (Provisional birth data cuts are no longer provided as CDC Wonder will be used.)

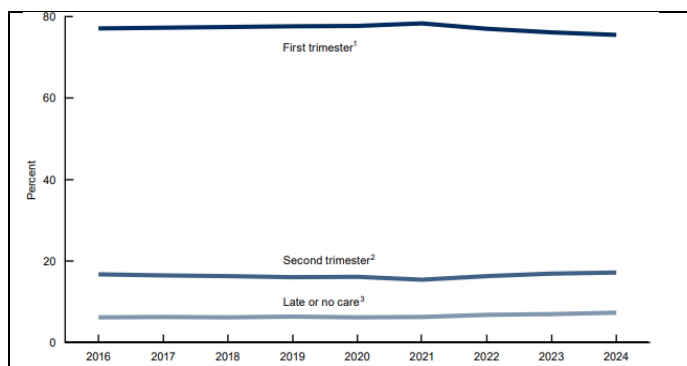
Final release of 2025 birth data to Hyattsville (DACEB)	June 8, 2026
<b>2025 DEATH FILE</b>	
Contract closeout for 2025 death data (states)	May 1, 2026
Last day 2025 death updates accepted (states)	June 26, 2026
Pause medical processing for data quality review (DACEB)	July 24, 2026
Final release of 2025 death data to Hyattsville and resume medical processing (DACEB)	September 25, 2026
<b>2025 FETAL DEATH FILE</b>	
Contract closeout for 2025 fetal death data (states)	May 1, 2026
Last day 2025 fetal death updates accepted (states)	August 28, 2026
Final release of 2025 fetal death data to Hyattsville	October 26, 2026

**Notable Publications/Data Briefs**

**Changes in Timing of Prenatal Care Initiation: United States, 2021–2024**

This report was published in February and can be found at this link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db550.pdf>



**Figure 1. Timing of prenatal care initiation: United States, 2016-2024**

Findings from this report show that after increasing from 2016 (77.1%) to 2021 (78.3%), prenatal care beginning in the first trimester of pregnancy decreased to 75.5% in 2024. From 2021 to 2024, prenatal care beginning in the second trimester increased from 15.4% to 17.3%, and late or no care increased from 6.3% to 7.3%. From 2021 to 2024, prenatal care beginning in the first trimester decreased, while care beginning in the second trimester and late or no care increased for all maternal age groups and for nearly all race and Hispanic-origin groups,

from 2021 to 2024. From 2021 to 2024, late or no care increased in 36 states and the District of Columbia.

**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](mailto:MDI@CDC.gov).

**The National Association of City and County Health Offices (NACCHO) AI Tips** NACCHO recently published a blog post on what local health department communicators need to know about AI. The tips are useful to MDI offices too! Read the [blog post](#) and discover useful tips for your medical examiner or coroner office.

**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:** Hidden Homicides: Overcoming the Challenges of Staged Crime Scenes

**Presenters:** Casey Gwinn, Esq, and Bill Smock, MD, Louisville, KY Police Dept

**When:** April 14, 2026 from 3:00 to 4:00 pm Eastern

**Title:** Stronger Together: OSHA and Medical Examiners and Coroners Collaborating to Safeguard Worker Health

**Presenter:** Dawn L. Cannon, MD, MS, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

**When:** June 9, 2026 from 3:00-4:00 pm Eastern

**Vital Statistics Modernization Community of Practice**



**The Vital Statistics Modernization Community of Practice (NVSS COP)** is a collaborative space for learning and innovation. It provides a setting for jurisdictions and their

partners to collaborate in the modernization space.

## February Highlights and What's Ahead for the NVSS

### Modernization CoP

February was an active and productive month for the NVSS Modernization Community of Practice (CoP), with continued progress in testing, certification readiness, and shared learning across jurisdictions.

### NCHS-Hosted February Testing Event (February 23–24)

On February 23–24, NCHS hosted its first quarterly FHIR testing event of the year. These events remain a key milestone along the NVSS modernization pathway, supporting jurisdictions as they enhance systems, participate in informal and formal testing, complete pre-certification, and move toward certification and production.

Testing events provide jurisdictions the opportunity to:

- Validate FHIR-based mortality, natality, and fetal death workflows
- Engage directly with NCHS subject matter experts and technical partners
- Identify and resolve implementation issues in structured, collaborative setting

We appreciate the jurisdictions who participated as testers and observers, as well as the partners who supported the event. Your engagement continues to strengthen our collective progress toward nationwide FHIR-based exchange.

The next NCHS-hosted testing events in 2026 are scheduled for:

- June 1–2
- September 14–15
- December 7–8

### Mortality FHIR Certification Training (February 18 Main CoP Meeting)

During the February 18 Main CoP meeting, we provided focused training on the NVSS Mortality FHIR pre-certification and certification process. The session reviewed key milestones, documentation, expectations, and practical considerations for jurisdictions preparing to certify. We also heard from two jurisdictions (Maryland and South Carolina) that recently completed certification, who shared their experiences and lessons learned with the CoP.

For those who were unable to attend, a recording of the session is available on the [NVSS Modernization CoP SharePoint](#) site, along with all past meeting materials and

recordings. The SharePoint site remains the central repository for testing artifacts, guidance documents, presentations, and other implementation resources.

Jurisdictions are also encouraged to use the Zulip [Death-on-FHIR](#) and [Birth-and-Fetal-Death-on-FHIR](#) channels to report technical issues, ask implementation questions, and browse previously resolved discussions. These channels remain an important venue for peer-to-peer support and timely issue resolution.

If your jurisdiction is preparing for pre-certification or certification, we encourage you to review the training materials and reach out with any questions.

### Upcoming: March Main CoP Meeting (March 18)

Our next Main CoP meeting will take place on March 18. As always, the meeting will include updates, discussion, and opportunities for engagement across jurisdictions and partners.

If you are not yet on the NVSS Modernization distribution list, please contact [NVSSModernization@cdc.gov](mailto:NVSSModernization@cdc.gov) to be added and receive meeting invitations and updates.

Thank you for your continued participation and collaboration. The steady progress we are seeing across jurisdictions reflects the strength of this community and the shared commitment to modernizing vital statistics using FHIR.

### Vital Staff Spotlights

Jurisdictions may add as many names as they would like to our NCHS Newsletter mailing list! Just send a note to George Tolson at [gct1@cdc.gov](mailto:gct1@cdc.gov).

Marsha Trump departed her position as VSCP Project Director in Oregon.

Angela Gillette was appointed VSCP Project Director in Oregon.

Robert Lee departed his position as VSCP Project Director in North Carolina.

Terra Ankrah was appointed VSCP Project Director in North Carolina.

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