Orientation Preamble for Summit

Preamble Purpose: to orient participants to the vision, scope, and long-term plan for possibly setting up a uniform reporting system (URS) for the collection of legally acquired, de-identified, and secure intimate partner homicide (IPH) data gathered by domestic violence fatality review teams. These discussions regarding the feasibility and form of the URS comprise the focus of the Summit Meeting in Flagstaff, June 24-26, 2019.

To date, we have limited systematic national and international knowledge concerning the idiosyncrasies of IPHs and other domestic violence related deaths and near deaths. For at least 20 years, fatality reviews have contributed to that knowledge. As a result of requests from fatality review teams to try to set up a URS or Clearinghouse, OVW and the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative (NDVFRI) agreed to attempt to build a Clearinghouse that gathers information from teams, and, under specific conditions, returns data analyses to teams.

Fatality reviews have the potential to provide a rich, in-depth picture of the circumstances surrounding IPH and, eventually, other domestic violence related deaths and possibly near deaths. The Summit therefore will explore the possibilities of gathering and tracking data from review teams in a confidential, secure, and consensual way, thereby providing new insights into the development of preventive interventions. To this end, the pre-Summit preparatory work with team representatives and our work at the Summit will hopefully lead to the creation of draft data gathering instruments and protocols. We envision creating a 3-tiered tool with short, medium and longer question/item sets. Part of these conversations entail addressing legal and technical issues related to the content to be potentially captured by the Clearinghouse. Discussions will also explore the possible commitments of teams to report data to the URS, and the possible syntheses and return of data from the Clearinghouse to teams for use in report writing, making policy recommendations, and for other purposes teams deem valuable. Examples of the return of aggregate data to teams might include information regarding the role of firearms in IPHs, distance of the scene of death from available medical services, details concerning orders of protection, information about prior police calls to the residence, and data about the degree of contact with community agencies, stakeholders, and others prior to the killing.

We very much want to communicate in this orientation preamble the fact that the Clearinghouse or URS is very much a “work in progress” and that attendees will play an active role in shaping. To this end, the Summit will consist of a mix of plenary and breakout discussions organized around three themes: legal and ethical questions, gathering and sharing data, and communications within and between teams.