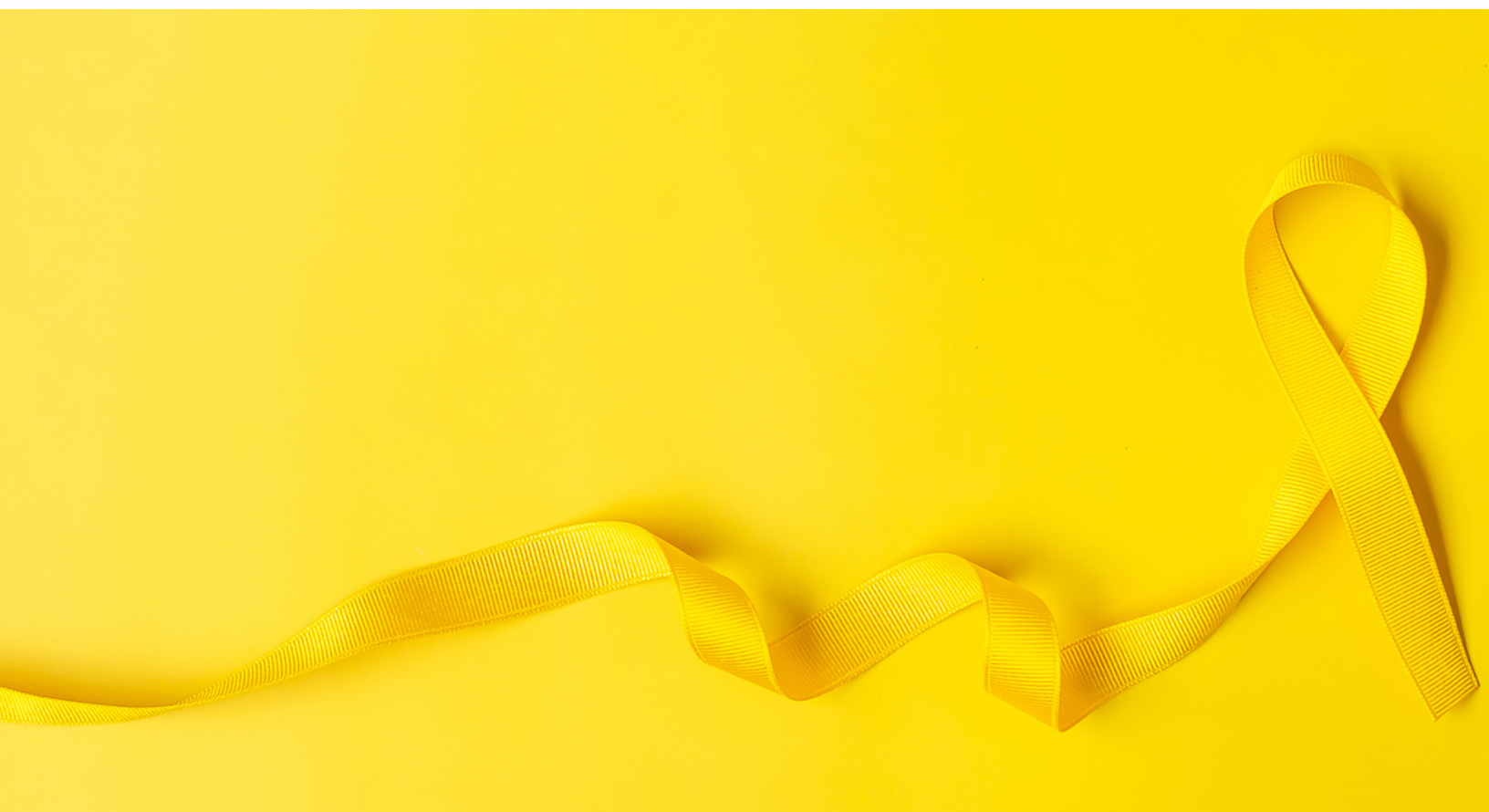




*"Striving Toward a **Healthier** Community."*

SUICIDE FATALITY REVIEW ANNUAL REPORT 2023





*"Striving Toward a **Healthier** Community."*

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INTRODUCTION

In 2016, Stark County experienced a significant increase in teen suicide deaths. Stark County Mental Health and Addition Recovery (StarkMHAR) partnered with the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address the increase in teen suicide death. The Northeast Ohio Youth Health Survey was implemented in schools in conjunction with the Stark County Health Department. Through survey results, StarkMHAR was able to address needs teens identified. These changes resulted in a decrease of suicide deaths within this age group.

Suicide deaths of all ages continued to significantly affect Stark County residents. StarkMHAR identified a need to continue to address the increase in suicide deaths of all age groups. In September of 2021, the Ohio Revised Code provided guidelines for counties to establish a Suicide Fatality Review Board under the direction of a health commissioner. In 2022, Kirkland Norris was appointed by the Stark County Commissioners to establish a suicide fatality review board with the purpose of reducing suicide deaths.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the suicide fatality review (SFR) process is to reduce the incidence of suicide deaths in Stark County. This will be completed through a multidisciplinary and comprehensive review of individual suicide deaths. The SFR committee will identify, evaluate, and make recommendations to improve community programs and systems that serve Stark County residents.

The Ohio Revised Code 307.643 states "The purpose of the suicide fatality review committee is to decrease the incidence of preventable suicide deaths by doing all of the following:

- (A) Promoting cooperation, collaboration, and communication between all groups, professions, agencies, or entities engaged in suicide prevention, education, or mental health treatment efforts.
- (B) Maintaining a comprehensive database of all suicide deaths that occur in the county or region served by the review committee in order to develop an understanding of the causes and incidence of those deaths.
- (C) Recommending and developing plans for implementing local service program changes and changes to the groups, professions and agencies, or entities that serve local residents that might prevent suicide deaths.
- (D) Advising the department of health of aggregate data, trends, and patterns concerning suicide deaths."

This report will provide feedback and recommendations that community leaders and stakeholders have recommended after analyzing suicide deaths that occurred in 2023.

SFR MEETING TIME TABLE AND STRUCTURE

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings are held quarterly, or as often as necessary. The frequency of meetings are determined by how many cases are released for review. Four meetings were held in 2023.

Structure

The county commissioners appointed a health commissioner to establish the SFR committee. ORC 307.642 states, "The review committee shall consist of the following:

- 1.The chief of police of a police department in the county or region or the county sheriff or a designee of the chief or sheriff;
- 2.A public health official or the official's designee;
- 3.The executive director of a board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services or the executive director's designee;
- 4.A physician authorized under Chapter 4731. of the Revised Code to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine and surgery."

The committee also chose to invite the county coroner as well as the county commissioners. Each invited member as the same duty and responsibility as the appointed members.

Voting- Each appointed official pursuant to ORC 307.642 and each agency has one vote on each matter brought before the team.

Quorum- At all meetings of the SFR team, the presence of a least a majority (3 of the 5 appointed officials) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction/purpose of business and voting. When quorum is not met, the SFR team will convene at a different time.

BOARD MEMBERS

Kirkland Norris, R.E.H.S, M.P.H
Health Commissioner

George T. Maier
Stark County Sherriff

Amanda Uhler MPH, RN,
Public Health Official

John Aller, LICDC-CS, LPCC-S
Executive Director of Stark County Mental Health and Addition Recovery

Dr. Maureen Ahmann, D.O
Physician



OTHER MEMBERS

Daniel Speece MSN, RN
Veteran Community Representative

Janet Weir Creighton
Stark County Commissioner

Elena Aslanides-Kandis M.Ed, LPCC-S
Stark County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery

Aubrey Neuenschwander BSN, RN
Stark County Health Department

Anju Mader M.D
Stark County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery

Ronald Rusnak, M.D.
Stark County Coroner

Tim Berczik
Jacksonv Township Fire Department

Maria Maurillo, MPH, RN
Stark County Health Department

Major CJ Stantz
Stark County Sherriff's Office

SFR REVIEW PROCCES AND DATA SOURCES

The SFR committee is focused on decedents of suicide who resided in Stark County. Recognizing suicide as a public health issue is founded on an understanding of suicidal behavior arising from contextual, biological, environmental, systemic, and social stressors. This approach focuses on prevention by addressing the known factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of suicide.

For each death by suicide, the committee will collect age, sex, race, ethnicity, the year the death occurred, the location of the death, the cause of death, factors that contributed, medical records and any other pertinent information.

Data was collected from medical agency records, public data, community services and local service databases. The cases reviewed in this report were deaths that occurred in 2023. Each case review is discussed among the team to gather a comprehensive understanding of the context of the decedent's life and the events and actions that led to the fatality. The discussions highlight potential contributing factors, intervention implications and recommendations for systemic improvements.

Data sources include: ODH Gateway Mortality Warehouse, behavioral health records, medical records, criminal justice records, death certificates, forensic records, prescription drug records, social service records, and military/veterans' affairs records.

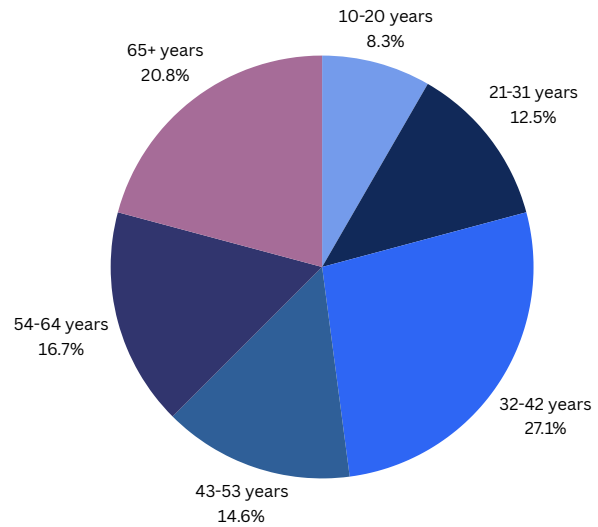
SFR ANNUAL REPORT SURVEY

Table 1: County Metrics

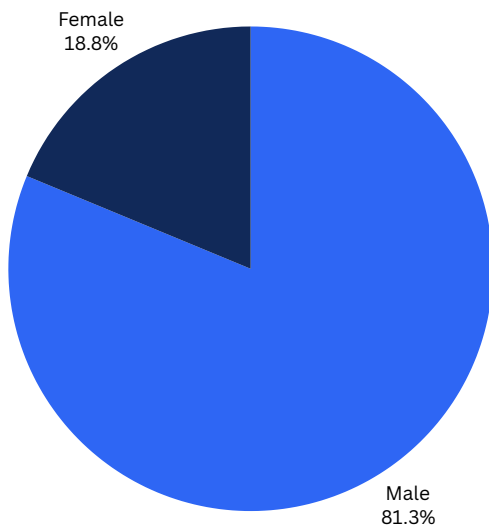
Total number of cases reviewed by SFR Committee	16
Total number of cases occurred in 2023*	48

Cases reviewed occurred in 2022 and 2023
*Per ODH Warehouse Data on March 18, 2024

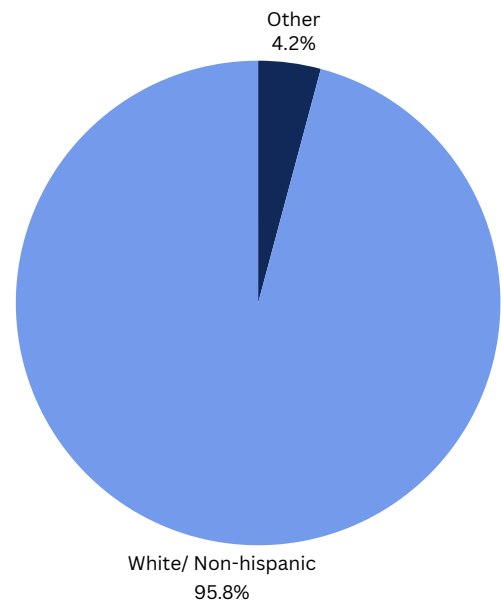
Graph 1: Age Metrics



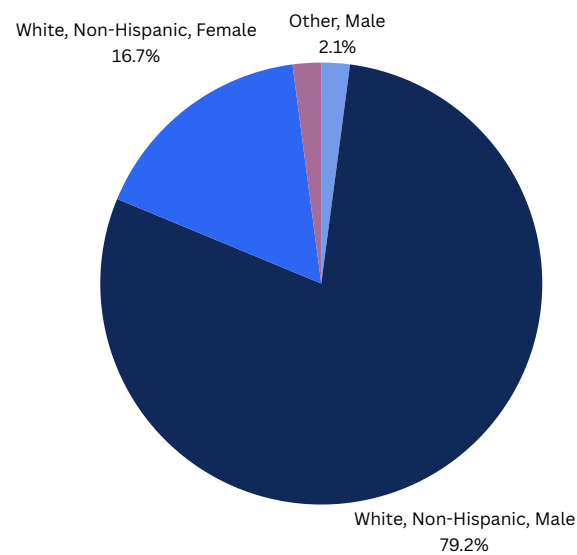
Graph 2: Sex Metrics



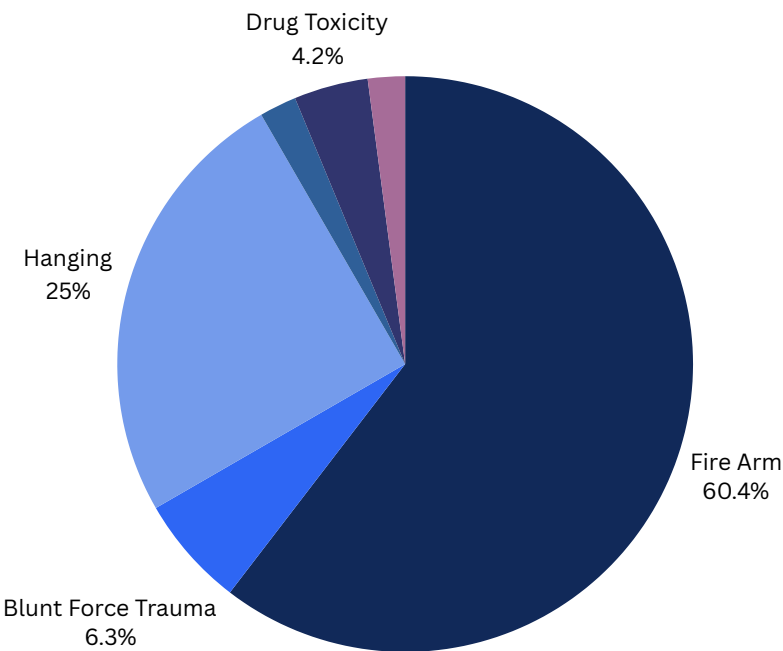
Graph 3: Race/Ethnicity Metrics



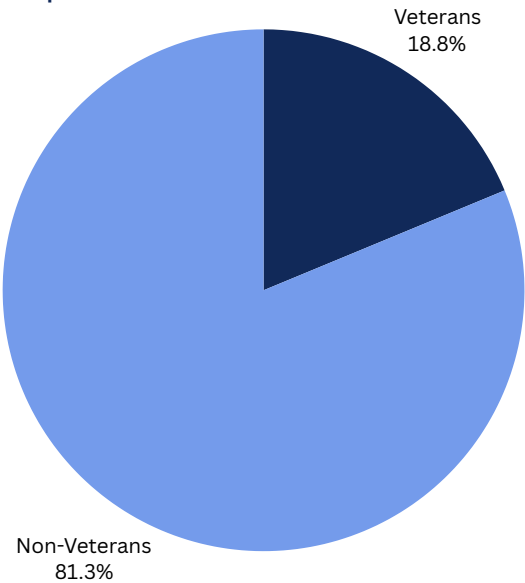
Graph 4: Race/Ethnicity/Sex Metrics



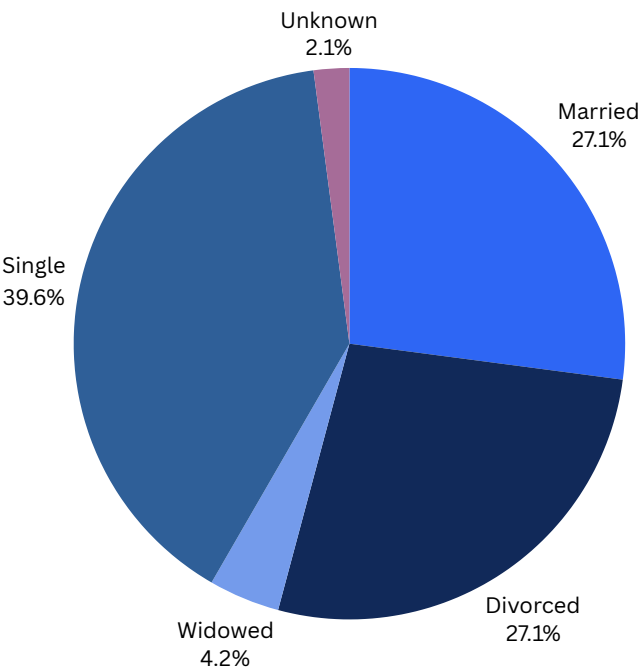
Graph 5: Method Metrics



Graph 6: Armed Services Metrics



Graph 7: Marital Status Metrics



STARK COUNTY SUMMARY INFORMATION

Trends/ Patterns

Sex	80.2% Male	19.8% Female				
Race	95.8% White	43.2% Other				
Ethnicity	97.9% Non-Hispanic	2.1% Hispanic				
Method	60.4% Firearm	25% Hanging	6.3% Blunt Force	4.2% Drug Toxicity	2.1% Cut or Pierce	2.1% Other

STARK COUNTY SUICIDE FATALITY REVIEW

2023 Recommendations

The following is a list of each recommendation from the Suicide Fatality Review team. Recommendations may be listed more than one time if it was recommended more than once.

- Community Campaign: Check on Your Neighbors.
- Provide education to funeral homes- include information about loved ones who may be at higher risk.
- Provide increased supports after someone receives a terminal diagnosis.
- Create a system to notify primary care providers when a patient has passed away.
- Provide families with grief resources at the time a death.
- Provide grief resources when someone picks up death certificates.
- Community Campaign: See Something, Say Something.
- Public education on warning signs of suicide.
- Have skilled nursing facilities screen patients for access to lethal means prior to discharge home.
- Increased contact and support after discharge from military.
- Awareness Campaign: See Something, Do Something.
- Refer to mental health after major cardiac events.
- Education on safe gun storage.
- Community connection sites/hubs for members to gather.
- Awareness Campaign: See Something, Say Something.
- Mental health follow up and support after an overdose event.
- School recommendation: PBIS implementation and use of shape tools.
- Increased caregiver support and respite for chronic injuries.
- Loss team implementation for family members.
- Suicide loss and grief resources provided to families at time of death.
- Offer suicide grief resources for EMS or others responding to scene.
- Community awareness: Mindfulness walk.
- Community Center or open spaces for gathering and meaningful connections.
- Transportation for elderly and vulnerable populations.
- Screening for living situations when individuals have voiced specific suicidal ideation and plans.

STARK COUNTY SUICIDE FATALITY REVIEW

2023 Recommendations Continued

- School recommendation: build community among peers, especially at the middle school level.
- Increased veteran transportation services.
- Suicidal ideation focused and specific treatment.
- utilization and implementation of safety plans
- Community Campaign: See Something, Say Something
- Education about Stark County Mobile Crisis.
- Education about Stark County specific resources.
- Advertise mental health resources late at night with targeted posts and ads.
- Use specific algorithms to target ads and education to people that are searching for key topics.
- Utilize family support specialists in the schools to pass out gun storage locks.
- Advertise gun safety.
- Connect with Stark County VA to provide gun storage locks to community members.
- Promote workplace programs, employee assistance programs.
- Provide safe gun storage ads with new businesses-- community partners, barbershops, fast food restaurants, community bars, faith and community organizations, bathrooms.
- Distribute information to parents who are caring for adult children regarding transition planning.
- Funding for alcohol treatment programs.
- Advocate for policy change that after multiple over the influence charges, court ordered drug and alcohol treatment program would be completed.
- Funding for alcohol treatment programs.
- Create community.
- Build and teach resiliency, especially starting with youth.
- Community Campaign: Check on Your Neighbor.
- Educate public on red flags for suicidal ideation.
- Use screening tool for anxiety and depression at each primary care visit.
- Create easier navigation of the veteran association system.
- Create an active veteran community.
- Community outreach and information distributed through veteran's programs and American Legion.

STARK COUNTY SUICIDE FATALITY REVIEW

2023 Summary of Implementation

- Education distributed to each long-term care facility and skilled nursing facility about reducing access to lethal means.
- Education provided to each family practice provider and each general practice provider in Stark County about C-SSRS screening tools and how to implement these tools. Information about reducing access to lethal means was also provided.
- Funeral homes were all provided with suicide loss survivor resource guides.
- Suicide loss survivor resource guides were provided to the four health department vital statistics divisions to be distributed any time someone picks up a death certificate for a death by suicide. These guides are also available for the public to access at resource tables.
- Mindfulness walk was held on August 27, 2023 at Petros Park.
- QPR training offered through StarkMHAR on a monthly basis.
- Gun storage lock distribution through Stark County Health Department and HealthMobile Unit.



www.StarkHealth.org

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