



Democratizing Public Health Data: Lessons from Oakland County

Lauren Fink, MPH; Hanna Cassise, MPH, CHES; Claudia Terrell, MPH, REHS



Data Democratization and Stewardship

Lauren Fink, MPH

Epidemiologist, Oakland County Health and Human Services

Data Democratization

Data are a shared asset, not a restricted resource.

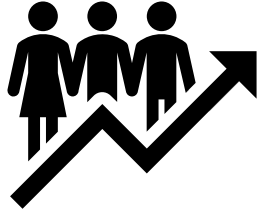
- Empower staff and partners to use data in daily work
- Establish governance for equitable and responsible access
- Encourage cross-program sharing to reduce silos
- Involve staff and community in data decisions

Data Stewardship

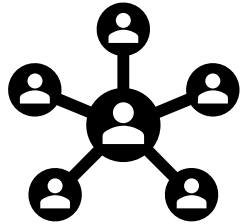
A data stewardship model ensures data are:

- **Trustworthy:** Accurate, complete, and managed with integrity
- **Accessible:** Shared responsibly so stakeholders can use it
- **Usable:** Clear, consistent, and meaningful for public health action
- **Secure:** Protected through privacy, confidentiality, and ethical safeguards

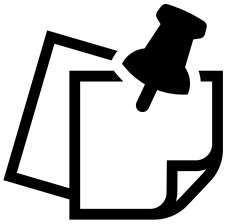
Data Stewardship Committee



The data stewardship committee is an opportunity for OCHHS staff to shape data practices and standards.



Members include a mix of technical and program staff.



Two workgroups:

- Data inventory
- Data standards

Data Inventory Resource Alert!



Metadata Governance Framework for Public Health: A Practical Guide

Prepared by Audacious Inquiry for the Council of State and
Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)

Final Version

July 30, 2025

Data Request Portal



Intake form on
Microsoft lists



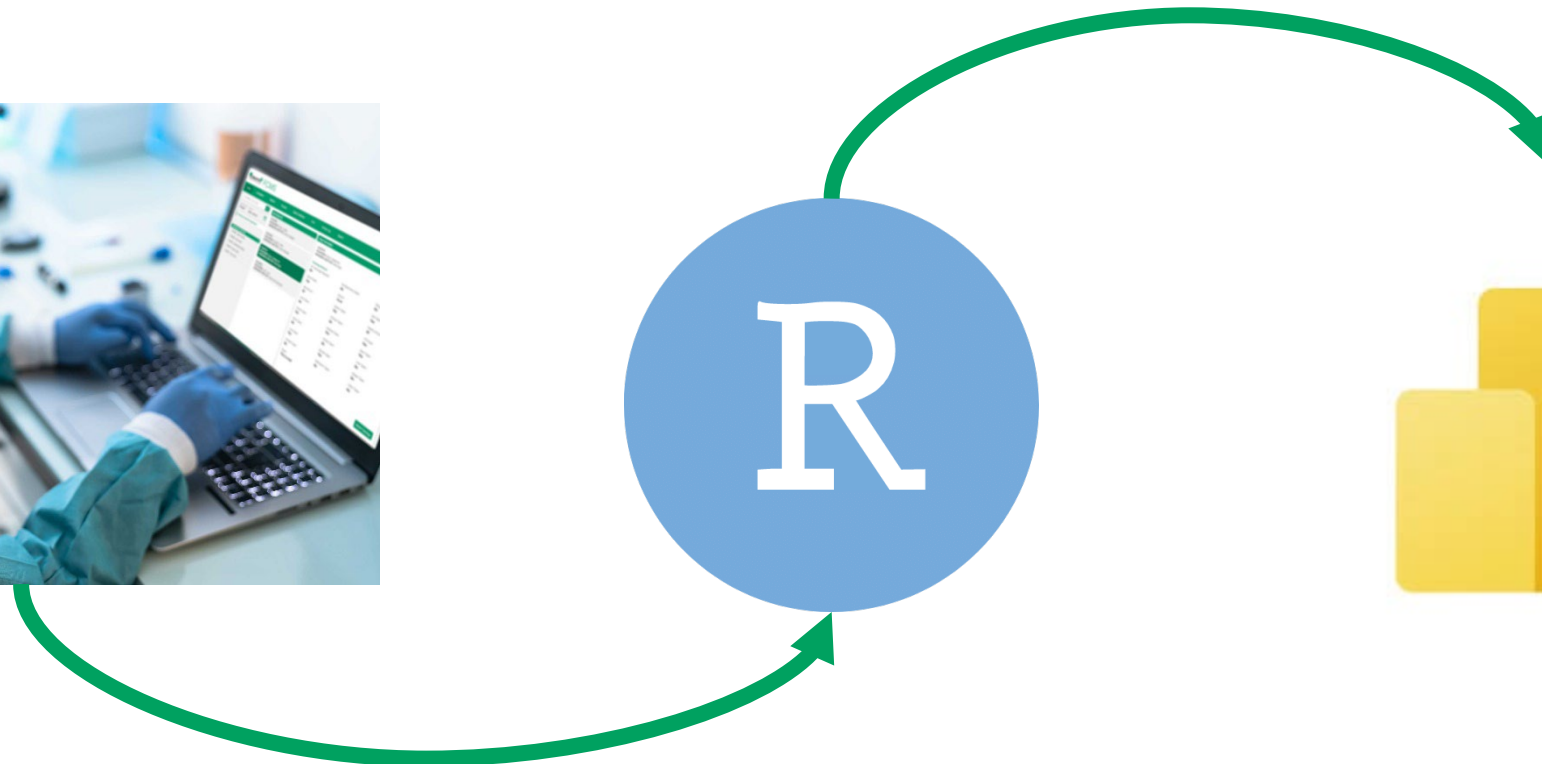
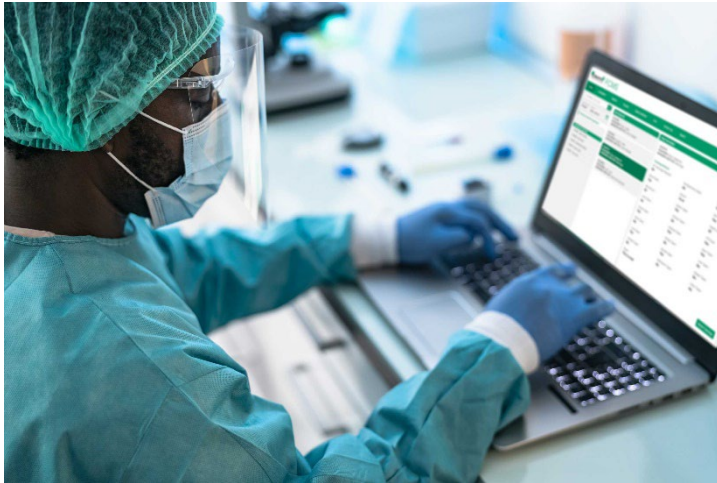
Assigned to data
team member



Tracked in Lists for
documentation

Regular Reporting – Example Workflow

Forensic case management data is cleaned in R and visualized in Power BI



Public Dashboard

Oakland County Medical Examiner Data Overview



Overview

Firearm

Suicide

Drug-Related

Data Notes

About This Dashboard

This dashboard highlights firearm, suicide, and drug-related deaths to support prevention efforts in Oakland County. It uses data from the Oakland County Medical Examiner, which includes deaths that occurred in the county but does not include county residents who died elsewhere.

Medical examiner data provides timely insights into deaths investigated within the county, but will differ from death certificate data verified through the vital records system.

For details on how deaths are categorized, see **Data Notes**.

Data includes all deaths with a complete investigation as of **April 30, 2025**. Data from **April 2025** is likely incomplete.

Every Life Counts

These numbers represent lives lost in Oakland County from 2020 to 2025. Click on a topic to learn more.

Firearms

Deaths Since 2020

599

January - April 2025

37

Suicide

Deaths since 2020

810

January - April 2025

43

Drug-Related

Deaths since 2020

1,333

January - April 2025

44

Trends Over Time

The numbers below reflect the change in annual deaths between two previous complete years.

Firearm Deaths Decreased

▼ -6.4%

2023 to 2024

Suicide Deaths Decreased

▼ -5.0%

2023 to 2024

Drug Deaths Decreased

▼ -33.3%

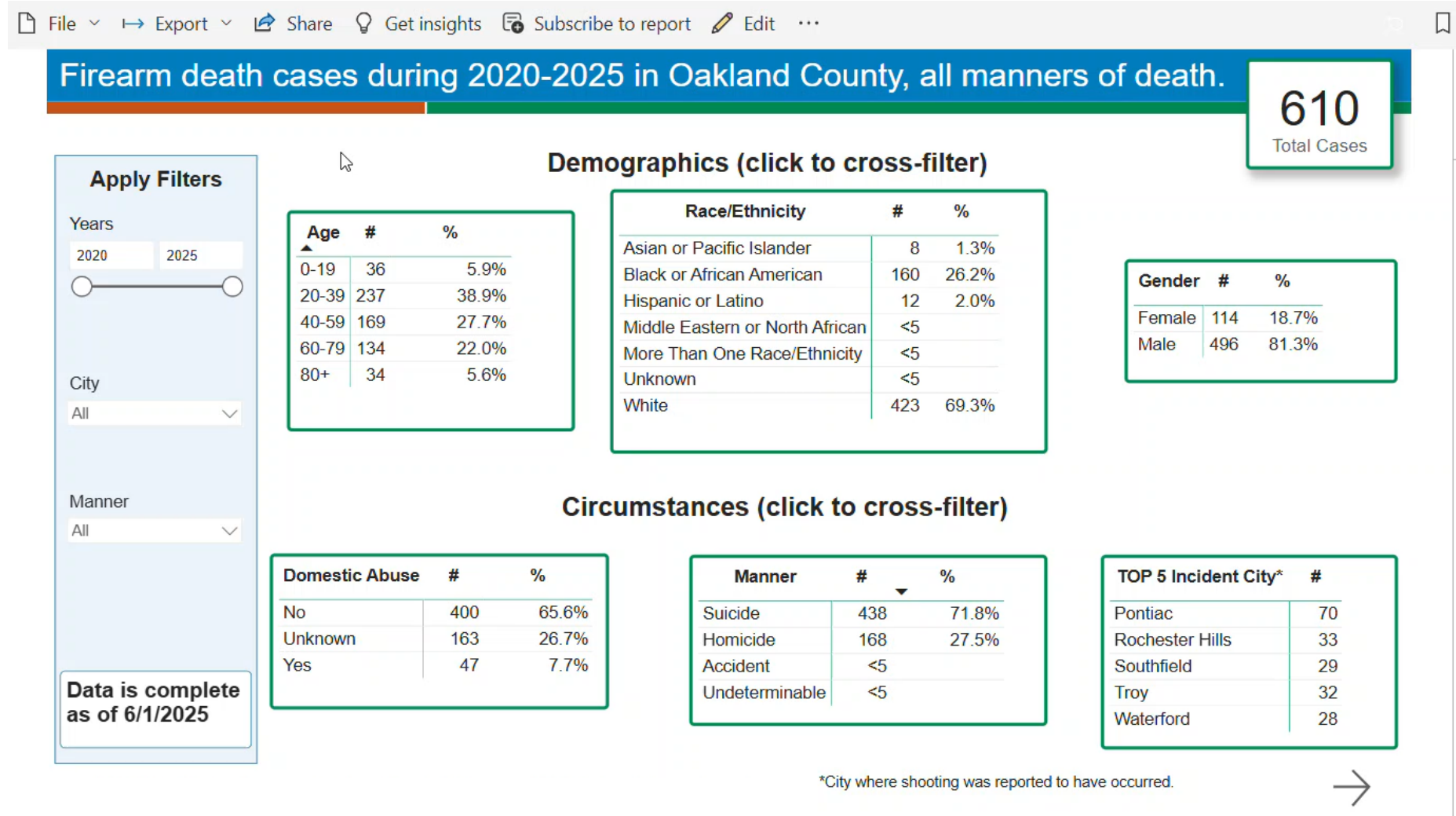
2023 to 2024

Public Dashboard



Scan to view the
Health of Oakland County
dashboard series!

Internal Dashboard



Question/Activity

What is it like trying to access data in your organization?

Are you able to get support working with data?

Communicating About Data with Partners

Hanna Cassise, MPH, CHES

Health Education Supervisor, Oakland County Health and Human Services

Playing Nice with Others



Why Share Data?

- ✓ Build Trust & Collaboration
- ✓ Improve Understanding
- ✓ Allocate Resources
- ✓ Health Equity
- ✓ Anticipate Challenges
- ✓ Inform Policies and Programs
- ✓ Improve Funding Opportunities

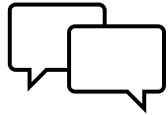
How Do We Share Data?

- Routine Meetings
- Community Events & Presentations
- Public Facing Dashboard
- Upon Request

Using Data to Inform Work



Oakland County Suicide Prevention Task Force



Oakland County Suicide Fatality Review Team



Oakland County Health Division Zero Suicide Workgroup



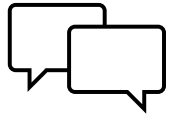
Oakland County Suicide Prevention Task Force

Inputs

- Improved data transparency at meetings
- Annual 'deep dive'
- Workplan updated every 2 years – informed by data

Outputs

- Focus on gun violence prevention efforts
- Gun lock and lock box distribution
- 'Community Discussion' events



Suicide Fatality Review Team

Inputs

- Presenting community level data at monthly meetings
- Selection of specific case(s) to review

Outputs

- Recommendations for prevention/intervention



Zero Suicide Workgroup

Inputs

Increased and improved data collection

- Screening
- Training

Outputs

- Targeted training efforts
- Process improvements for screening implementation

Data Democratization in Action for Suicide Prevention

COLLECT

Collect suicide data from multiple sources.

ANALYZE

Analyze the location, trends and characteristics of suicide decedents.

Interpret data and address data gaps with engaged partners.

Synthesize findings to identify key priorities for programmatic efforts.

EVALUATE

Assess and evaluate the program impact.

Identify opportunities and challenges for the program and process improvements.

Disseminate and discuss findings with partners.

IMPLEMENT

Prioritize and implement activities via established groups such as the Suicide Prevention Task Force.

Focus on reaching target populations to effectively meet community needs.

Identify and respond to emerging challenges.



Question/Activity

Think, Pair, and Share

Think about a group you are a member of. This could be an internal group like your staff/coworkers, a workgroup, or routine 1:1 interaction with clients. It could also be an external workgroup like a coalition or task force.

How are you using data to make an impact?

How would you like to use data more effectively?

Case Study: Engaging Food Truck Owners

Claudia Terrell, MPH, REHS

Environmental Health Services Chief, Oakland County Health and Human Services

Environmental Health



Michigan Association of Local Environmental Health Administrators (MALEHA)



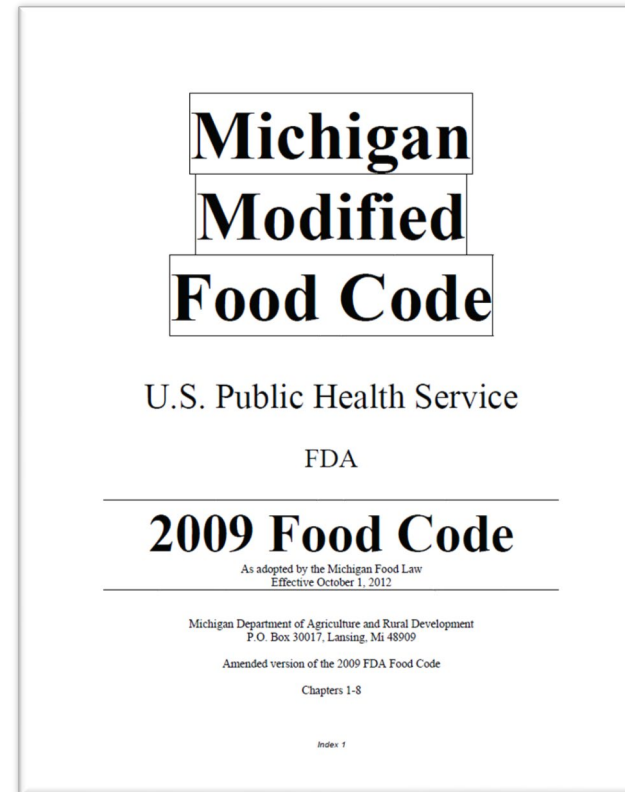
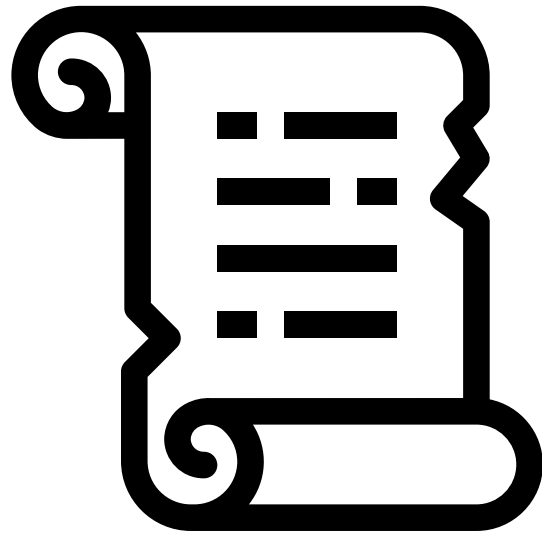
► Environmental Health Directors Forum

Environmental health administrators work closely with several state departments and provide essential front line services that impact public health in multiple environmental health program areas.

Food Committee



Michigan Food Law, Act 92 of 2000



How to improve the system?

Ad Hoc Committee

What do we do?

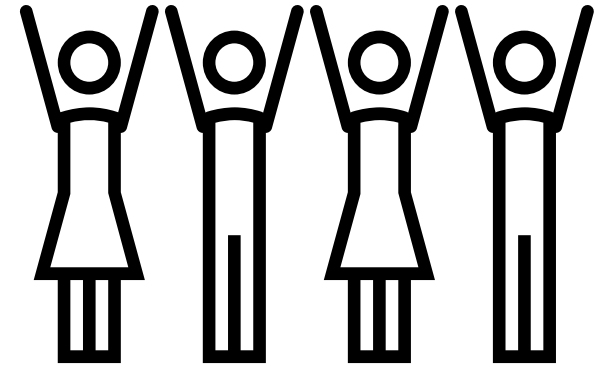
SURVEY!

Survey

- This is going out to a lot of people...
 - How do we make it accessible?
 - Are the questions getting the responses we need?
 - How long is too long?
 - Do we say it like this? Or, maybe like this?

Survey Sent

- 219 people responded
 - 19% response rate!
- Analysis
 - Quantitative – we got this!
 - Qualitative – say what?



Themes Emerged

- Too much paperwork!
- Everyone does things differently
- Make it more streamlined, efficient and consistent

61% of respondents willing to participate further

Focus Groups

- How many?
- When?
- What platform?
- What do we ask?

Current Status

- Proposed updates for the Food Law with input from regulatory and industry!

Your turn! Ask us questions.



**OAKLAND
COUNTY**
MICHIGAN

DAVID COULTER
OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE

