



# Suicide Mortality Review (SMR) Program

## What is a Suicide Mortality Review Team?

A team of local, multi-sector representatives who work together to review circumstances surrounding a death by suicide. These reviews utilize all available data and information, with the goals of better understanding how and why a person dies by suicide; improving our response to suicide deaths; and developing prevention initiatives to improve the health and safety of our communities. Additionally, death review teams work to educate the public and policy makers by reporting on localized trends, risk factors, or patterns of suicide deaths, and making recommendations for changes in law, policy, or practice that will prevent future deaths by suicide.

## PA ACT 101 (2022)

1. Authorizes the creation of county suicide death review teams in Pennsylvania.
2. Outlines the process for the establishment of these teams and their duties.
3. Addresses confidentiality of death review team records and criminal and civil liability protections.

Access the full version by scanning this QR code:



Pennsylvania  
Department of Military  
and Veterans Affairs

## SMR Program Overview

The SMR Program works to engage officials, service providers, and death investigation teams across the Commonwealth, in the development of county-level SMR Teams under PA Act 101 legislation.

Counties can apply through DMVA to be considered for participation in the SMR Program. Counties that are selected to participate will receive financial support and technical assistance to develop an SMR Team, as well as additional funds for approved supportive initiatives that work to strengthen local suicide prevention frameworks.

By fostering collaboration and engaging with communities, the SMR Program seeks to create a robust network of support for Pennsylvanians, ultimately reducing the incidence of suicides and improving mental health outcomes overall.

## SMR Program: Priority Areas

Every county is unique - with varying resources, staffing, and priorities. SMR program staff understand this and work with each participating county to develop a unique implementation plan that meets their needs and best serves their community. Although the program embraces a flexible approach, priority is given to the following areas for partnership and funding:

### 1. Local Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS)

The development of county-level (or joint-county) LOSS Teams is a top priority of the SMR Program. LOSS is a suicide postvention model, in which two or more volunteers with lived-experience, called a LOSS Team, proactively offer support to a decedent's family and friends immediately following a death by suicide. A LOSS Team provides loss survivors with practical support, a connection to resources, and peer support for the newly bereaved.

### 2. Lethal Means Safety (LMS)

The development of LMS initiatives is a top priority of the SMR Program. LMS aims to reduce suicide risk by limiting access to lethal means and by intentionally creating time and space between individuals in crisis and the means for self-directed violence. LMS opportunities exist at multiple levels- societal-level laws and policies, community-level partnerships and education, interpersonal-level relationships, and individual behavior changes. Examples include, but are not limited to, safe storage education, pill box and gun lock distribution, medication take back events, safety planning, etc.

Questions? Contact Patti at [patanner@pa.gov](mailto:patanner@pa.gov)