Policy and Procedure for Requesting Access to Public Use Maryland SUDORS Data Files

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The Maryland State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) is a systematic surveillance system for capturing detail about the circumstances of accidental and undetermined intent overdose fatality and is currently collected as a project under the Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grant. Summary SUDORS data is available through a federal online portal at https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/fatal/dashboard/index.html as well as through data products and reports prepared by Maryland which are available on the Maryland SUDORS webpage at https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/Injury/Pages/sudors.aspx. For copies, contact the SUDORS project manager at Georgette.Lavetsky@maryland.org; the OD2A surveillance coordinator at charles.howsare@maryland.gov, or the OD2A program manager at Marie.Stratton@maryland.gov.

Requests for a public-use version of the Maryland SUDORS data file for independent analysis by data requesters require approval by the SUDORS data managers and review by the Strategic Data Initiative (SDI) Team https://health.maryland.gov/iac/Pages/sdi.aspx. This document describes the process and timeline for making requests for data files and includes all required forms.

Maryland SUDORS data files are available by calendar year and by six-month period (January – June and July – December) beginning with July 2017. Please note the 2017 and 2018 data files only include data for opioid-related fatal overdose as collected under the Enhanced State Opioid Overdose Surveillance (ESOOS) grant, while data from 2019 and later years will include data for all fatal overdose deaths and will not be limited to opioid-related overdose per requirements of the OD2A grant. Please also note that there is approximately a six month lag time between date of death and completion of data abstraction. Data for abstracted cases are collected by CDC on a semi-annual basis. Upon submission of data to the CDC, data undergo a thorough quality control procedure which takes several additional months. Therefore, data for deaths occurring between January 1, 2023 and June 30, 2023 are not expected to be available until spring of 2024, and so on.

Due to the sensitive nature of the data and data suppression requirements set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), requesters will generally be provided a public use version of the raw data file which includes only the variables they specifically requested and which were approved by the SUDORS data managers. Public use data files will generally not include personally identifying information (PII) such as name, date of birth, death certificate number, medical examiner number, census tract and block, and so forth unless specifically requested and approved. For more information, please refer to the list of SUDORS variables.

Key steps:

1. Data file requests will be acknowledged upon receipt of the completed data file request and data use agreement.

2. Data file requests will then undergo an internal review process. Additional information may be required to clarify a data file request.

3. An approval decision by the SUDORS program is typically provided within four weeks of request.

4. Upon approval by SUDORS, all requests for data files are reviewed by Maryland's Strategic Data Initiative (SDI). Timelines and requirements for SDI review are set forth by the SDI review body. For more information about SDI, please visit https://health.maryland.gov/iac/Pages/sdi.aspx.

5. The data file(s) is typically sent within two weeks of SDI approval; however, the time to produce the file will vary by size of the request and other programmatic activities. If the DUA is not complete, including IRB documentation as appropriate, receipt of the data file will be delayed.

Use the form below to submit a data file request and to sign a data use agreement (DUA). Both are required at the time of request.

Please note: All fields are required. Failure to provide requested information, including copies of IRB approvals, as appropriate, will result in delays. If additional space is needed, please attach additional sheets.

Maryland State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS)

Data File Request Form

Requester contact information:
Last name:
First name:
Organizational affiliation:
Phone number:
Email address:

Description of need for data:

Q1: Identify the periods for which data are requested.
☐ 2017 – Partial year, July to December - OPIOID ONLY ☐ 2018 – Full year - OPIOID ONLY ☐ 2019 – Full year ☐ 2020 – Full year ☐ 2021 – Full year ☐ 2022 – Full year ☐ 2023 – Partial year, January to June

Q2: Describe the purpose for which data are requested and the analyses that will be conducted, including the need for the public use data file. If this may be considered research, include a description of the proposed study design. In addition to a project overview, please describe your need to link SUDORS data to other data, if applicable. Include your anticipated project timeline and a description of any anticipated reports and publications.

Q3: List the variables you would like included in the data set and explain the importance of the variables to your analysis. No explanation is required for requesting demographic variables. Single explanations for groups of variables is acceptable in some circumstances (e.g. reason for requesting toxicology findings which include multiple variables requires one explanation). If you are requesting access to personally identifying information (PII) such as medical examiner record number, census block and tract, etc., please clearly state this and provide a detailed justification of the need for PII.

Q4: Describe the primary applicant's qualifications to perform proposed analyses. Include any prior experience analyzing large and complex data files. Include names and qualifications of all additional individuals participating in this project who will be granted access to the data file.

Q5: Identify the public health benefit of the proposed analysis for prevention and response efforts, including any benefit to the State of Maryland.

Q6: If a requester's project may be considered research, the requester is required to submit an approval or exemption letter from the Maryland Department of Health Institutional Review Board (IRB) in addition to their own IRB, if applicable. If the requester does not believe their proposed analysis could be considered research, a full explanation of the reasons why must be provided below.	
Project considered research? (Check "Yes" or "No" below)	
☐ **Yes** **Select one** ☐ IRB decision received (Attach copy of MDH IRB approval/exemption to data file request) ☐ IRB decision pending	☐ **No** **Explain**

Maryland State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS)

Data Use Agreement

This agreement establishes the terms and conditions under which the data recipient and other analysts stated in this application can acquire and use the Maryland State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) data set.

1. The data recipient agrees to only use the data set for the purposes described in this application.
2. The data recipient agrees to only share, publish, or otherwise release any findings or conclusions derived from analysis of the SUDORS data set through the specific reports and publications described in the recipient's application **and** with prior review and approval from the Maryland SUDORS program prior to release of data.
3. The data recipient has the qualifications necessary to analyze large and complex public health data sets. The data recipient agrees to consult the Maryland SUDORS program with any data use or analysis questions.
4. The data recipient agrees to work collaboratively with the Maryland SUDORS program to understand and adhere to SUDORS data analysis and data suppression requirements, which prohibit any sharing or publication of data about populations and population sub-groups with fewer than 11 decedents represented in the data file.
5. The data recipient has obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption for research involving deceased subjects from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) IRB and any additional affiliated IRBs as applicable.
6. The data recipient has obtained SDI approval for this project as applicable.
7. The data recipient agrees to use appropriate administrative, physical, and technical safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the data set other than as provided for by this agreement.
8. The data recipient agrees to only share the data set with the analyst(s) named in this application. If additional analysts will be added to the project, the data recipient agrees to notify the SUDORS Program in writing within 5 days. The data recipient agrees not to release data to any other third party without prior written approval from the Maryland SUDORS program.
9. The data recipient agrees to include the following disclaimer on any reports or publications, if applicable: *This publication utilizes data provided by the Maryland Department of Health, Maryland State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS); collected under guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under cooperative agreement number [INSERT COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT NUMBER(S) HERE]; and analyzed by [INSERT NAME OR ORGANIZATION HERE]. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Maryland Department of Health or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

10. The data recipient agrees to notify the Maryland SUDORS Program immediately upon having reason to know or suspect that a data breach, unauthorized data use, or confidentiality violation has occurred.
11. This data use agreement remains in effect for one calendar year from the approval date, after which time it will expire unless renewed by the Maryland SUDORS program.
12. All data shall remain the property of the Maryland Department of Health, and the data recipient agrees to return the data set to the Maryland SUDORS program or destroy the data set upon termination of this agreement or the end of the project.

Signature of data requester Date