

Additional Assistance

For more information on how to obtain additional records or for further assistance, please contact:

Individual and Family Support

Monday through Friday from 9am - 5pm

Call: **1-800-624-4143** and request Individual and Family Support.

Email: supportcoordinator@justicecenter.ny.gov

For more information, visit our website at:

<http://www.justicecenter.ny.gov/>



REPORT: Abuse, Neglect and Significant Incidents

Vulnerable Persons' Central Register
(VPCR) Hotline Toll-free

1-855-373-2122

Reports Accepted 24 Hours a Day, Seven Days a Week

Death Assessments and Investigations:

Guidance for Families and
Personal Representatives

For more information and additional details on the
New York State Justice Center, please visit:

www.justicecenter.ny.gov



**Justice Center for the
Protection of People
with Special Needs**

The NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs is committed to supporting and protecting the health, safety and dignity of all people with special needs and disabilities through advocacy of their civil rights; prevention of mistreatment; and investigation of all allegations of abuse and neglect so that appropriate actions are taken.

What deaths are reported to the Justice Center?

Every director or designee of a residential or inpatient program operated, licensed or certified by the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) or Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) must report the death of an individual who was in care at the time of death to the Justice Center. Programs must also report the death of an individual who was discharged less than 30 days prior to death.

All deaths reported to the Justice Center are assessed to determine whether further review or investigation is necessary.

What information is reported?

The cause and manner of death as well as specific information about the person's medical, psychiatric and behavioral presentation 90 days prior to their death. Complete information about what is reported can be found on the Justice Center's website.

What does the Justice Center do with reports?

The circumstances surrounding the death of a person are examined to assess whether quality of care issues may have contributed to the person's death, and to make recommendations to improve care with the goal of preventing the recurrence of similar issues.

After completion of this assessment, a notification letter is sent to the director of the facility or provider agency and the legal guardian or personal representative, if known, notifying them that the assessment is closed.

If there are any issues or concerns regarding the quality of care, the Justice Center will make a report and, where appropriate, make recommendations to prevent future lapses in care. The report is also issued to the director of the facility or provider agency, the State Oversight Agency and the legal guardian or personal representative.

Who reviews death reports?

Each report is reviewed by investigators with human service program experience and health care professionals, including nurses. The Justice Center is also assisted by a medical review board whenever a medical opinion is required to determine the standard of care. The medical review board is composed of specialists in forensic pathology, psychiatry, internal medicine and addiction medicine.

What if there is an allegation of abuse or neglect?

If there is any reason to suspect abuse or neglect, the Justice Center notifies the appropriate district attorney and medical examiner. These allegations are also investigated by the Justice Center in the same manner as any other abuse and neglect allegation.

Do parents, guardians and/or personal representatives receive notification when a death has been reported?

The program or provider agency is required to notify the legal guardian or personal representative after learning of a death or learning of an allegation that was reported to the VPCR hotline.

How can I request additional information?

Qualified individuals may be entitled to receive additional records under Jonathan's Law or the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).