



Utah Suicide Mortality Research Study Advisory Group Charter

CHARTER BACKGROUND/PURPOSE:

The Utah Suicide Mortality Research Study (USMRS) was formed on an interdisciplinary basis to promote greater collaborative research opportunities aimed at studying risks contributing to deaths by suicide in Utah. In January 2025, Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) awarded USMRS a five-year Notice of Award (NOA) to design a project to support infrastructure costs and development, enhance stability of ongoing resource growth and to strengthen collaborations.

The USMRS Advisory Group (USMRS AG) was established in 2025 to advise and update the OVPR on the project. The USMRS AG will provide strategic oversight of the project, offering leadership in the governance of project activities, ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and serving as a steward of the resources provided by the OVPR.

The USMRS AG Charter guides the orientation, trajectory, and terms by which the USMRS AG will build and sustain infrastructure and executes USMRS research agenda toward a more expansive suicide research portfolio.

USMRS AG MISSION:

The mission of the Utah Suicide Mortality Research Study (USMRS) Advisory Group is to provide strategic oversight, community-informed guidance, and governance leadership to support the continued development and sustainability of USMRS infrastructure. Established in 2025 to advise the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR), the Advisory Group ensures that USMRS activities align with ethical



standards, regulatory requirements, and the overarching goal of advancing collaborative research aimed at studying risks contributing to deaths by suicide in Utah.

USRMS ADVISORY GROUP GOALS:

Advise and Inform the OVPR

Provide expert and community-informed input on key project components, deliverables, and directions supported by OVPR funding.

Develop and Maintain Governance Procedures

Establish, implement, and annually review operational procedures and supporting documentation to ensure alignment with the University of Utah Health Sciences Center's data sharing agreements, as well as applicable state and federal regulatory requirements.

Guide and Enhance Research Efforts

Recommend research priorities and opportunities that foster innovation and collaborations, support continuous progress, and expand the scope of suicide mortality research.

Support Sustainable Use of USMRS Resources

Promote long-term sustainability and appropriate use of USMRS infrastructure while ensuring that resources are protected and used responsibly and collaboratively.

Promote Consensus and Strategic Planning

Facilitate collaborative decision-making among Advisory Group members to assess sustainability plans, evaluate the cost-benefit of research directions, and mitigate risks to ensure the future success of the USMRS initiative.

USRMS ADVISORY GROUP SUCCESS MEASURES:

The USMRS AG will be considered a success if:



- The USMRS AG produces an annual report to the OVPR on reviewed and approved research efforts using the USMRS project resources.
- Project stakeholders¹ are meaningfully engaged in informing the proposed research and in reviewing and commenting on the project goals and objectives.
- They ensure project decisions maintain alignment with the state of Utah and University of Utah and recognize/respect the unique constraints associated with suicide research.
- The project schedule strikes a balance between developing collaborative and rigorous scientific outcomes with efficient and compliant use of limited project funding.
- Appropriate staff are involved throughout the process to apply critical knowledge and expertise, ensuring timely and effective implementation and utilization of resources to support ongoing and future research efforts.

TERMS OF USMRS ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERSHIP:

USMRS AG members agree to actively participate in their responsibilities until their tenure is complete.

A member's position on the USMRS AG may be declared vacant if the member:

- Resigns from the USMRS AG (this should be in writing and forwarded to the OVPR).
- Fails to attend more than two meetings without prior notice.

¹ Project Stakeholders include and are not limited to data suppliers, bio sample suppliers, researchers, clinicians, health care systems, community representatives, University of Utah leadership



In a case where a member's position is declared vacant, the OVPR may appoint an alternative member from the same focus area to fill the position. New members with appropriate expertise will be trained accordingly on roles and responsibilities of USMRS AG membership and core duties. Each year the USMRS AG membership will be re-evaluated in consultation with the OVPR office based on the current direction of national/state/local research and public health objectives.

MEMBERSHIP:

- USMRS AG membership will be made up of individuals from multiple collaborating entities with cross-disciplinary relevant expertise who can meaningfully contribute to the project.
- At a minimum USMRS AG membership will have representatives from the following focus areas: Utah Office of the Medical Examiner, clinicians, scientists and experts in public health (per current focus), policy, ethics, implementation science, and lived experience. Membership must represent multiple departments within the University of Utah.
- A representative from the VPR Office will be attached to the USMRS AG and serve in a supportive capacity in an advise and assist role, with a primary focus on group leadership and succession strategy.
- A representative from the VPR Office will be attached to the USMRS AG to serve in a project operations manager role.

USMRS ADVISORY GROUP OPERATING GUIDELINES:

CONVENING OF MEETINGS:



- Meetings will be held at the time and place chosen by the USMRS AG.
- It is anticipated that there will be at least monthly meetings of the full USMRS AG. In addition, USMRS AG members are expected to participate in an annual retreat and In-Progress Reviews (IPRs) to the OVPR.
- USMRS AG members will be informed of monthly meetings through email at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

CONDUCT OF MEETINGS:

- Meetings will be facilitated by the OVPR Project Lead or the Project Manager in the absence of the OVPR Project lead.
- The OVPR Project Lead or the Project Manager or designee take accurate meeting notes, including attendance, key issues raised, decisions reached by majority vote, and actions required. Comments from individual members will not be attributed and a verbatim record of the meeting will not be prepared.
- The previous meeting record and a meeting agenda will be forwarded to members of the USMRS AG at least one week before the next meeting. Any changes to the record of past meetings shall be in writing and forwarded to the OVPR prior to the next meeting.

MEETING GROUND RULES:

- It is expected that the facilitator and members will strive to ensure that all members who wish to have an opportunity to speak are afforded a chance to do so.



- It is expected that members will maintain a respectful stance towards all participants, attempt to understand diverse perspectives and interests, and actively participate, sharing information openly, promptly, and respectfully.
- If requested to do so, by the facilitator, members will hold questions to the end of meeting presentations.

COMMUNICATION:

- Project documents and notices will be posted in the project UBox repositories.
- OVPR Project Lead, and all USMRS AG members, should be copied on all email correspondence related to AG activities.
- Significant decisions impacting research related processes by the AG will be communicated in a timely fashion to USMRS stakeholders.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

USMRS AG members agree to:

- Provide specific subject-matter expertise, including identifying emerging research issues.
- Identify and propose solutions for emerging security, ethical, or legislation related issues that could impact sustainability and progression of USMRS research efforts.
- Review project reports and comment promptly.
- Attend meetings and prepare appropriately.



- Complete necessary assignments prior to each meeting.
- Articulate and reflect on the interests that advisory group members bring to the table.
- Maintain a focus on solutions that benefit the entire project.
- Present to OVPR its recommendations for the project in a semi-annual progress review and annual progress reports as defined in the NOA. The USMRS AG shall select from among its members a presenter or team of presenters.
- Advise new members of the USMRS AG of roles and responsibilities as needed

OVPR AND THE PROJECT MANAGER AGREE TO:

- Provide sufficient support to effectively manage the scope, schedule, and budget including collaboration and coordination with other stakeholders as necessary or required by University policies and procedures.
- Keep USMRS AG partners informed of progress.
- Provide documentation to support recommendations.
- Brief key decision makers and produce briefing materials and reports.
- Provide early notification of USMRS AG meetings and provide ten working days to review and comment on technical reports and other documents.
- Conduct meetings necessary to inform and engage the community.
- Manage coordination for meetings.



- Explain the reasons when any deviations are taken from USMRS AG recommendations.
- Provide USMRS AG members with the opportunity to collaborate with other agencies and groups on making recommendations for the project.

DECISION MAKING:

The USMRS AG is primarily advisory. When collective decisions are required, members will strive to reach consensus and decisions will be made by majority vote. If a vote is split preventing agreement on a particular issue, OVPR will retain final decision-making authority.

The USMRS AG will advise the OVPR in developing and reviewing annually a process to resolve conflict when/if an issue arises with the USMRS research group that cannot be easily resolved. This process will be outlined in the USMRS operating procedures. This process will follow existing University of Utah processes for conflict resolution.

