



July 12, 2024

Director Karhlton F. Moore
Bureau of Justice Assistance
Office of Justice Programs
U.S. Department of Justice
810 7th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20531

Re: [Public comment on proposed information collection, "Death in Custody Reporting Act Program Collection", OMB Number 1121-0365.](#)

Dear Director Moore,

NAMI appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in support of the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) proposed "Death in Custody Reporting Act Program Collection." NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for all people affected by mental illness. We do this by providing education, support, public awareness, and advocacy through our over 650 state and local affiliate organizations in communities across the country.

NAMI strongly supports the continuation of the Death in Custody Reporting Act (DCRA) data collection activities. People with mental illness are overrepresented in our nation's criminal justice system. Tragically, during interactions with the justice system, people with mental illness are at elevated risk for negative outcomes, including death. Particularly vulnerable are people with serious mental illness (SMI), who can be at elevated risk for premature and unnatural deaths while in custody.

NAMI advocates to improve outcomes for people with mental illness who come into contact with the justice system. A key component of our work is having clear and unbiased data in order to support policy changes. The DCRA data collection offers this valuable source of detailed information that is essential for monitoring trends and developing policy and program solutions to prevent avoidable deaths. We applaud BJA for continuing this collection and believe that the data will help inform justice reform work across the country. Furthermore, we believe this data collection is a very necessary part of BJA's role and the utility of the information outweighs any burden placed on state and local agencies.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss our comments further, please contact Shannon Scully, Director of Justice Policy & Initiatives at sscully@nami.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah Wesolowski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hannah Wesolowski
Chief Advocacy Officer
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)