# STANDING ORDER REGARDING RELEASE OF FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATION REPORTS FOR ALL JUSTICE COURTS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY TEXAS

In 2018, Texas received the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Violent Death Reporting System grant to create the Texas Violent Death Reporting System (TVDRS). Violent deaths include suicides, homicides, accidental firearm deaths, and undetermined violent deaths. The TVDRS program is housed within the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS), Maternal and Child Heath, Office of Injury Prevention (OIP). The TVDRS grant's goal is to gather and analyze critical violent death elements from death certificates, medical examiners (MEs), justices of the peace (JPs), and law enforcement (LE) records. TVDRS links information about the "who", "when", "where", and "how" from multidisciplinary violent death data and provides insights about "why" the deaths occurred. TVDRS' mission is to use violent death data to inform decisions to help save lives.

Pursuant to the legal authority of Texas Health and Safety Code § 92.005, DSHS is given the broad authority to obtain access to health and medical records and other information relevant to epidemiologic investigation of injuries and their causes. DST-IS staff, under this statute and guidance of DSHS, are authorized to request and obtain medical and other records for this purpose. Strict confidentiality and privacy for decedents, their families, and health care providers is ensured. Information that may relate to any specific individual, case, or health care provider will be strictly confidential and will not be included in reports. No information about individual cases will be provided to either health care providers or facilities. All protocols comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule and state medical privacy statutes.

It is ordered by Montgomery County Justices of the Peace that the Montgomery County Forensic Services Office is authorized to release the following records to TVDRS staff for their use in data collection for the National Violent Death Reporting System:

- Forensic Investigation Report/Notes
- Autopsy Reports
- Toxicology Screens

Of deaths that resulted from an injury in Montgomery County that are medically certified as a: homicide, suicide, undetermined death, and unintentional firearm death.

Effective January 1, 2023 and until further order of the Montgomery County Justices of the Peace

Precinct 1 – Judge Wayne L. Mack

Precinct 2 – Judge Trey Spikes

Precinct 3 – Judge Matt Beasley

Precinct 4 – Judge Jason Dunn

Precinct 5 – Judge Matt Masden