

NEBRASKA

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Pete Ricketts, Governor

December 17, 2021

Patrick J. O'Donnell
Clerk of the Legislature
Room 2018, State Capitol
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Attached is the December 2021 Status Report on the Number of Nebraska Mental Health Commitment Records Submitted to National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

Authored by the Division of Behavioral Health of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Nebraska State Patrol, this report summarizes the number of records submitted, the disposition of those records and answers questions from the Legislature expressed in LB 699 and codified in statute 69-2409.01 section (5).

If you have any questions on this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheri Dawson".

Sheri Dawson, RN, BS
Director
Division of Behavioral Health
Department of Health and Human Services

enc: Statute 69-2409.01 – December 2021 Report

Statute 69-2409.01 - Report
Number of Nebraska Mental Health Commitment Records
Submitted to National Instant Criminal Background Check System

Status Report December 2021

Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Behavioral Health
Community Service Section
and Nebraska State Patrol
December 2021

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Introduction:

LB 1055 in 1996 instructed the then Department of Public Institutions to supply to the State Patrol, upon request, identifying information so that the Nebraska State Patrol could comply with the provisions of the The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (Pub.L.103–159, 107 Stat. 1536; (18 U.S.C. 921 and 922)). Provisions of Nebraska Revised Statute §69-2409.01 limited the information supplied to whether an individual is disqualified from purchasing or possessing a handgun pursuant to law. In late 1998, the Department launched a data repository consisting of mental health board commitment paper reports mailed to the Department by district court clerks. Those records were shared via spreadsheet with the Patrol on a monthly basis so the Patrol could update the mental health file used to review firearm permit application within Nebraska. A second reporting system also populated the mental health file at the Patrol. That reporting consisted of a listing of admissions to the state psychiatric hospitals who met certain admission standards. The two sets of information were combined by the State Patrol to create a mental health file against which firearm permit requests could be checked. This mental health file was used exclusively in Nebraska to determine persons disqualified for permits under the Brady Handgun Act and state statutes.

In 2009, the development of an automated internet-based reporting system usable by the district court clerks was initiated. In early 2012, through the combined efforts of the Nebraska State Patrol, the Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer, and the Division of Behavioral Health of the Department of Health and Human Services, planning and implementation of the Electronic Commitment Reporting Application (ECRA) became a reality. The first electronic records for mental health commitments by mental health commitment boards were initiated in November 2012. In April of 2014, records of individuals admitted to the Lincoln, Hastings and Norfolk Regional Centers who met certain conditions for admission were added to the database. With these efforts prohibitor 18 U.S.C. 922 (g) (4) – “Has been adjudicated as a mental defective or has been committed to a mental institution” is substantially fulfilled. Through the combined efforts of the agencies and funds from the National Instant Criminal Background Check System Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) grant, Nebraska mental health commitment information began to be reported to federal level in late 2013 and continues today. Mental health board commitments and regional center admissions (meeting reporting requirements) are continuously reported and incomplete records continue to be researched and completed.

This report will summarize the number of records submitted, the disposition of those records and answer questions from the Legislature expressed in LB 699 and codified in statute 69-2409.01 section (5).

**Nebraska Mental Health Commitment Records
Reported to
National Instant Criminal Background Check System
Status Report December 2021**

Nebraska State Statute Section 69-2409.01 requires the Department of Health and Human Services and Nebraska State Patrol to report to the Legislature on mental health commitment activities of the state.

69-2409.01 (5) The Nebraska State Patrol and the Department of Health and Human Services shall report electronically to the clerk of the Legislature on a biannual basis the following information about the database (mental health commitments):

(a) The number of total records of persons unable to purchase or possess firearms because of disqualification or disability shared with the National Instant Criminal Background Check System;

(b) The number of shared records by category of such persons;

(c) The change in number of total shared records and change in number of records by category from the previous six months;

(d) The number of records existing but not able to be shared with the National Instant Criminal Background Check System because the record was incomplete and unable to be accepted by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System; and

(e) The number of hours or days, if any, during which the database was unable to share records with the National Instant Criminal Background Check System and the reason for such inability.

Summary Table for Legislative Questions:

Legislative Request as of:	December 2018	June 2019	December 2019	June 2020	December 2020	June 2021	December 2021
(a)* – Total Shared Records	31,802	32,471	33,076	33,512	33,866	34,201	34,600
(b-1) – From Commitment Boards	18,016	18,586	19,060	19,443	19,747	20,030	20,359
(b-2) – From Regional Centers	13,786	13,885	14,016	14,069	14,119	14,171	14,241
(c) – Change in Total	605	669	605	436	354	335	399
(c-1) – From Commitment Boards	541	570	474	383	304	283	329
(c-2) – From Regional Centers	64	99	131	53	50	52	70
(d) – Incomplete	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(e) – Hours Inoperable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Department of Health and Human Services – December 2021.

*(a) Reflects only those effectively shared with National Instant Criminal Background Check System. Incompletes reported in (d).

**Social Security Number or Date of Birth are required; however, this information has at times been missing or invalid creating an incomplete record.

The report shall also be published on the web sites of the Nebraska State Patrol and the Department of Health and Human Services. Available at: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Mental-Health-Commitment.aspx> and <https://statepatrol.nebraska.gov/services/concealed-handgun-permits>