

Child Fatality Task Force



North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force

The NC Child Fatality Task Force (CFTF) is a legislative study commission that examines the causes of child death and makes recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on how to reduce child death, prevent abuse and neglect, and promote the safety and well-being of children. Since the 1991 creation of the Task Force and the broader Child Fatality Prevention System, the child death rate has decreased by 46%.

ABOUT

The Child Fatality Task was created in 1991 within Article 14 of the North Carolina Juvenile Code (N.C.G.S. 7B-1400 – 1414).

There are 35 members: Four appointed by the Governor; ten appointed by the Speaker of the House (including 5 legislators); ten appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate (including 5 legislators); eleven Ex Officio (by virtue of their position in state government). Appointments address areas of expertise relevant to child fatality prevention.

Leadership: Two Task Force members are elected as co-chairs; there are two co-chairs for each of three committees; an Executive Director for the Task Force is housed in the Children & Youth Branch of the Division of Public Health.

CFTF is part of a 3-pronged Child Fatality Prevention System set up to identify and address system deficiencies: **Local Prevention Teams** consist of Community Child Protection Teams who review abuse and neglect cases and related deaths and Child Fatality Prevention Teams who review other deaths; in some counties these teams are blended. The **State Child Fatality Prevention Team** reviews cases involving unexpected/unexplained causes of death. The **Child Fatality Task Force** is the policy arm of the system (and does not review individual cases).

TASK FORCE PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES (N.C.G.S. 7B-1400, 1403)

- Study, analyze, and report on incidences and causes of child death
- Assure a system for multidisciplinary review of child deaths
- Receive and consider reports from State Team
- Perform other studies and evaluations as needed in order to carry out our mandate
- Submit annual report with recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly
- Carry out purpose of the statewide child fatality prevention system to ***make and implement recommendations for laws, rules, and policies that will support the safe and healthy development of our children and prevent future child abuse, neglect, and death.***

TASK FORCE PROCESS

- Full Task Force meets between legislative sessions.
- Three Issue-Specific Committees also meet to determine recommendations to make to full Task Force.
 - Perinatal Health (healthy pregnancies, births, and infants)
 - Unintentional Death Prevention (e.g. motor vehicle or bicycle accidents, poisoning, burning, drowning, etc.)
 - Intentional Death Prevention (homicides, suicides, abuse and neglect)
- Stakeholder groups or study groups may be convened to address specific issues.
- Recommendations are based on data, research, and evidence-informed practice, reflecting hundreds of hours of volunteer input. Meetings are open to the public, and documents and presentations are posted on the CFTF website.

HIGHLIGHTED TASK FORCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Perinatal Health

Two-thirds of child deaths are to infants. Some accomplishments include being recognized as a national leader in the use of 17-progesterone to reduce preterm births, promotion of best practices for safe sleep, support for perinatal tobacco cessation and prevention, birth defects monitoring, and creation of the NC Equity in Birth Outcomes Council.

Unintentional Death Prevention

Some accomplishments include graduated driver license requirements, backseat seat-belt laws, increased penalties for speeding in a school zone, booster and infant seat requirements, ATV restrictions, strengthen impaired driving laws, bike helmet laws, smoke detector and CO requirements, strengthening Controlled Substances Reporting System, support for drug take-back and poison prevention programs.

Intentional Death Prevention

Some accomplishments in this area include re-writing child welfare laws, improved services to abused and neglected children, supporting home visiting and family preservation programs, promoting Safe Surrender for babies who would otherwise be abandoned, increasing the penalty for selling a gun to a minor and manufacturing methamphetamines in a location that endangers children, support for trauma-informed care.

CURRENT TASK FORCE MEMBERS (August 2017)

Michael Becketts

Asst. Secretary for Human Services, DHHS

Stan Bingham

Public Member

Cindy Bizzell

Guardian Ad Litem Program

Dr. Elaine Cabinum-Foeller

NC Pediatric Society

**IDP Committee Co-Chair*

Brent Culbertson

State Bureau of Investigation

Dr. Ellen Essick

Department of Public Instruction

Martha Sue Hall

NC League of Municipalities

**UDP Committee Co-Chair*

John P. Harris

Brevard Chief of Police

Michelle Hughes

Executive Director, NC Child

**IDP Committee Co-Chair*

Dr. Kelly Kimple

Women's & Children's Section, DPH

Sarah Kirkman

Conference of District Attorneys

Dana Mangum

NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Dr. Ben Matthews

NC Department of Public Instruction

Dr. Marty McCaffrey

Perinatal Quality Collaborative of NC

Karen McLeod

CEO, Benchmarks

**CFTF Co-Chair*

Dr. Debi Radisch

NC Chief Medical Examiner

Susan E. Robinson

NC Div. MH/DD/SAS

Pamela Tyler Thompson

NC Domestic Violence Commission

Vanessa Totten

NC Office of the Attorney General

Dr. Sarah Verbiest

UNC Center for Maternal and Infant Health; **PH Committee Co-Chair*

Dr. Mandy Cohen

Secretary

NC Dept. Health & Human Services

Appointed seats currently vacant during transitions:

- Council for Women & Youth Involvement
- NC Assn. of Local Health Departments
- NC Association of County Commissioners
- DSS Director

NC Senate Members:

Chad Barefoot
Don Davis
Cathy Dunn
Kathy Harrington
Joyce Krawiec

NC House of Representative Members:

Craig Horn
Donny Lambeth
Gregory Murphy
Robert Reives, II
Donna White

Other CFTF Executive Committee contacts: **Kella Hatcher**, CFTF Executive Director (kella.hatcher@dhhs.nc.gov); **Alan Dellapenna**, Branch Head, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch, Division of Public Health (Unintentional Death Prevention Committee Co-Chair); **Belinda Pettiford**, Branch Head, Women's Health Branch, Division of Public Health (Perinatal Committee Co-Chair).