

Child Death Data Review Workgroup: Recommendations to Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet

Elizabeth Dudek, Chair
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Workgroup Members

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| Elizabeth Dudek, Chair | Agency for Health Care Administration |
| Major Connie Shingledecker | Manatee Co. Sheriff's Office |
| Megan Gil | Executive Office of Governor Rick Scott |
| Jamie Self, PhD | Department of Children and Families |
| Ralph Salvas | Department of Transportation |
| Lisa Johnson, MD | Department of Juvenile Justice |
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Workgroup Focus

The Child Death Data Review Workgroup (*CDDRW*) evaluated the existing processes for child death reviews with the goal of improving communication and collaboration across agencies regarding the investigation of child deaths. The *CDDRW* has unanimously adopted its first recommendations to Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet on ways to improve the state and local child death investigation and review process.



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Child Death Data Review Workgroup

RECOMMENDATIONS



CDDRW Recommendation 1:

Expand the state child death review process to allow review of all deaths of children up to 18 years of age and participate in the US National Child Death Review case reporting system.



Recommendation 1: Background

- Florida reviews only those child deaths “verified” by DCF as stemming from abuse.
- The child death review process works best when *all* child deaths are reviewed.
- Death review expansion would capture cases involving neglect that are missed in current limited reviews.
- The State’s ability to proactively identify/address trends in preventable child deaths would be enhanced.
- The *US National Child Death Review Case Reporting System* has produced a national consensus child death dataset.
- The national dataset uses a form that can be easily implemented in Florida to capture data on every child death.
- This uniform and universal data would make the centralized review of all child deaths both feasible and cost effective.
- The recommendation allows communities to expand their reviews as resources allow.



CDDRW Recommendation 2:

Endorse the Protect Our Kids Act as filed in the US Senate.

Recommendation 2: Background

- The Protect Our Kids Act creates a commission to develop a national strategy and recommendations for reducing fatalities resulting from child abuse and neglect.
- These steps are crucial to the creation of an effective national child death review process.
- The identification of best practices for all child death reviews would assist the implementation of Recommendation 1.
- The Act has been formally endorsed by several child protection teams and organizations in Florida.
- The Act is jointly sponsored by Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine).

CDDRW Recommendation 3:

Support the reinstatement of the Sunshine Law exemption that allows child death case reviews to be conducted without being subjected to video or audio recording.

Recommendation 3: Background

- Child death case reviews are confidential and not subject to Sunshine Laws.
- Confidentiality allows sensitive information to be shared among committee members.
- Florida statute was changed to require the recording of committee case reviews.
- Recordings may remain confidential limit the candor of participants discussing cases subject to criminal or civil court proceedings.
- The resulting lack of disclosure impedes the case reviews.
