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### **North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force convenes statewide Child Fatality Prevention System Summit**

**RALEIGH** – This week professionals from across the state who participate in local and state groups that have a role in the North Carolina Child Fatality Prevention System came together for a two-day summit in Raleigh.

The North Carolina Child Fatality Prevention System (CFP System) was created in 1991 by state statute, and consists of local child fatality review teams in every county, a state child fatality review team led by the Chief Medical Examiner, and the [Child Fatality Task Force](#) (Task Force), a legislative study commission that makes policy recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly and does not conduct child fatality reviews. Review teams and the Task Force are composed of groups of multi-disciplinary members with expertise or specific leadership roles that are applicable to addressing child fatalities and maltreatment.

Participants in the system work to study and understand causes of childhood deaths, advance a communitywide approach to the prevention of child fatalities and child maltreatment, and identify gaps in systems designed to prevent child maltreatment and death. A primary purpose of the CFP System is to make and implement recommendations for laws, rules, and policies that will support the safe and healthy development of children and prevent future child fatalities and maltreatment.

This Summit, held during National Child Abuse Prevention month, was a first-of-its-kind historic event where participants had the opportunity to learn from state and national experts, share best practices and challenges, and take part in launching state and local initiatives focused on strengthening the CFP System and creating safer and healthier communities for North Carolina’s children. The idea for the Summit originated with the Executive Committee of the Task Force, who received support from the full Task Force for advancing plans for the Summit. “The fact that we did not have dedicated resources to tap for this event did not deter us,” said Kella Hatcher, Executive Director of the Task Force. “We were able to make the Summit happen through collaborative efforts of several public and private organizations, with a planning team consisting of Child Fatality Prevention System leaders and others who devoted tremendous time and expertise to make this event possible.”

The Summit had plenary and breakout sessions featuring over 40 speakers and panelists that included state experts in child health and safety as well as state leaders such as Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Attorney General Josh Stein, N.C. House Representative Craig Horn and Dr. Elizabeth Tilson, State Health Director. Also speaking were national experts including Abby Collier, Director of the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention, and Teri Covington, Director of *Within Our Reach*, the organization charged with implementing recommendations from the national Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities. Summit attendees participated in work groups that will continue to exist after the Summit, and had the opportunity to begin developing strategic action plans for strengthening their group’s work within the CFP System.

Since the CFP System was created in 1991, the child death rate in North Carolina has decreased by 45 percent. “We truly believe that our state’s Child Fatality Prevention System has played a significant role in decreasing the child death rate, and our hope is that the work at this Summit and beyond will serve to strengthen our ability to prevent future child deaths and maltreatment,” said Karen McLeod, Chair of the Task Force.