

Child Fatality Task Force



Child Fatality Task Force Recommendation: Legislation for Fetal & Infant Mortality Reviews (FIMRs)

North Carolina's infant mortality rate is the 11th highest in the U.S. and NC rates have been stagnant since 2010.¹

Disparities persist, with Black infants dying at more than twice the rate of white infants.

A Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) is a specific type of multidisciplinary team review of fetal and infant deaths designed to better understand a death with the goal of preventing future deaths and addressing disparities.

[Fetal and Infant Mortality Reviews](#) began in the late 1980's, and now there are approximately 146 FIMR programs in 25 states, with just one current FIMR program in North Carolina that began recently in Guilford County. FIMR teams develop recommendations and implement local efforts to improve systems of care, services, and resources. A FIMR team anywhere in North Carolina can also help inform prevention work at the State and community level and ideally, the number of FIMR teams in our state would grow. Yet without FIMR legislation, a community faces barriers to starting and effectively operating a FIMR team.

There are existing laws in North Carolina that enable and support other types of child death review teams and a maternal mortality review team in NC,² but there are no such laws for FIMRs. These laws not only address the purpose and operation of teams but also provide for access to and protection of information that is essential for conducting effective reviews. A FIMR has similarities to the local, multidisciplinary child death reviews (CDRs) that are currently performed in every county in North Carolina, but FIMRs have significant variations that require different resources and policies, including an interview with the family.

FIMR laws in North Carolina are needed to make it easier for communities to start FIMR teams and operate them effectively to carry out their purpose of preventing future fetal and infant deaths.

The Child Fatality Task Force is a legislative study commission that recommends policy solutions to prevent child death, prevent abuse and neglect, and support the health and safety of children.

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FIMR is widely used across the US as a tool to help prevent infant and fetal deaths and address disparities.

FIMR laws in North Carolina can help our state make use of this tool at a time when it has never been more important to optimize strategies to lower North Carolina's high infant mortality rates and address racial disparities.

¹ 2022 data is the most recently finalized infant mortality data from the NC State Center for Health Statistics, NCDHHS.

² See Article 14 of the NC Juvenile Code and N.C.G.S. § 130A-33.60.