



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

Latest available data puts North Carolina's infant mortality rate at the 11th highest in the U.S. and NC rates have been stagnant since 2010.¹

Disparities persist, and in 2023 in North Carolina, Black infants died at rates three times higher than white infants.²

A Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) is a specific type of multidisciplinary team study of fetal and infant deaths designed to better understand why a baby died with the goal of preventing future deaths and eliminating disparities.

[Fetal and Infant Mortality Reviews](#) began in the late 1980's, and there are approximately 146 FIMR programs across 25 states. North Carolina has only one FIMR program which is located in Guilford County; ideally this number will grow. FIMR teams develop recommendations for prevention and implement local efforts to improve systems of care, services, and resources. A FIMR team anywhere in North Carolina can inform prevention work at the State and community level. FIMR legislation is needed to remove community 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,³ 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 utilize different resources and policies, including an interview with the family to understand their situation and challenges they may have faced.⁴

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 end 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 The National Center for Health Statistics has not yet released infant mortality rankings for 2023; this ranking is based on 2022 data sourced from the NC State Center for Health Statistics and the National Center for Health Statistics.

² NCDHHS Division of Public Health, Title V Office analysis of 2023 NC Resident Death Certificate & Live Birth Certificate Data.

³ See Article 14 of the NC Juvenile Code and N.C.G.S. § 130A-33.60.

⁴ The family interview is important, but can only be done when the family consents to it.