



"The Review" Division of Child Fatality Review

Farewell to CFR Director Eva Pattillo

In January 2010, Eva Pattillo, the Executive Director of the Georgia Child Fatality Review Panel, left her position with the office after 13 years of service. Georgia House Representative Melvin Everson, also a member of the CFR Panel, introduced a Resolution honoring Eva and her tremendous contributions to child welfare and safety over the years. HR 1145 is excerpted here:



“WHEREAS, Ms. Eva Pattillo has long been recognized by the citizens of this state for the vital role that she has played in leadership and her deep personal commitment to the welfare of the children of Georgia; and

WHEREAS, she has diligently and conscientiously devoted innumerable hours of her time, talents, and energy toward improving the lives and safety of children as evidenced dramatically by her superlative service as executive director for the Georgia Child Fatality Review Panel; and

WHEREAS, she has worked with the Georgia Child Fatality Review Panel since 1996 when the office was called the Georgia Statewide Child Abuse Prevention Panel and was instrumental in obtaining state funding for operations and collaboration from counties around this state in order to establish a team approach to child death investigations; and

WHEREAS, due to her leadership and support, the Georgia Child Fatality Review Panel has grown to be recognized as a national leader in training, investigation support, review compliance, and standardized reporting of child deaths and serves as a reliable resource for prevention information for local review committees and state partners; and

WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that the outstanding accomplishments of this remarkable and distinguished Georgian be appropriately recognized.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that the members of this body commend Ms. Eva Pattillo for her efficient, effective, unselfish, and dedicated public service to the State of Georgia.”



*CFR Division staff
(Left to Right: A. Raheem, R. Carnesale, Eva Pattillo, W. Parker, and M. Shakir)*

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Policies in Georgia: Federal CAPTA Requirements

The key federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect is the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), originally enacted in 1974. CAPTA provides federal funding to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities and also provides grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for demonstration programs and projects. Additionally, CAPTA identifies the federal role in supporting research, evaluation, technical assistance, and data collection activities, establishes the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, and sets forth a minimum definition of child abuse and neglect.



The establishment of citizen review panels for all state Child Protective Services (CPS) systems was mandated by the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) reauthorization of 1996 for all states receiving a CAPTA grant. Georgia designated three existing committees to serve as CAPTA citizen review panels to fulfill this requirement: Child Protective Services Advisory Committee, Children’s Justice Act Advisory Committee, and Georgia Child Fatality Review Panel. The purpose of CAPTA citizen review panels is threefold: 1) to examine the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local CPS agencies; 2) to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the agency’s child abuse prevention and treatment strategies in producing the desired child and family outcomes; and 3) to determine whether CPS systems are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. Each of the three existing panels has a child welfare vision and mission that would support meeting these objectives and satisfy the CAPTA requirement. Visit www.caresolutions.com for Georgia’s CAPTA Citizens Review Panel Annual Report.

In general, CAPTA requires that a state preserve the confidentiality of all child abuse and neglect reports and records in order to protect the rights of the child and the child's parents or guardians. However, CAPTA allows the state to release information to certain individuals and entities. The state *may* share confidential child abuse and neglect reports and records that are made and maintained in accordance with CAPTA with any of the following: individuals who are the subject of a report; a grand jury or court, when necessary to determine an issue before the court or grand jury; and other entities or classes of individuals who are authorized by statute to receive information pursuant to a legitimate state purpose.

The state *must* provide certain otherwise confidential child abuse and neglect information to the following: any federal, state, or local government entity, or any agent of such entity, that has a need for such information in order to carry out its responsibilities under law to protect children from abuse and neglect; child abuse citizen review panels; public disclosure of the findings or information about the case of child abuse or neglect that results in a child fatality or near fatality, unless such disclosure of information would jeopardize a criminal investigation or proceeding; and **Child fatality review panels**. To achieve one of these requirements, CFR is working with DFCS and other agencies to facilitate a “near fatality” review process for the purposes of reporting and developing prevention strategies.

For more information on this issue, please contact the CFR staff at 404-656-4200 or the DFCS Family and Child Safety Unit at 404-657-3413.

L: Rep. Melvin Everson, Eva Pattillo, and Sen. Gloria Butler



R: CFR Panel Co-Chair Vanita Hullander and Eva Pattillo



2010 Legislation Updates

Senate Bill 458 - to eliminate certain exemptions to the required use of safety belts (sponsored by Sen. Don Thomas-54) passed the Senate on March 24 and awaits a vote from the House. Georgia is currently the only state that exempts pickup truck drivers/passengers from using seatbelts. SB 458 will exempt farmers from seatbelt requirements during farming activities.



House Bill 938 - to prohibit use of wireless telecommunications devices for sending or reading text messages while operating a motor vehicle (sponsored by Rep. Allen Peake-137) is pending in the Georgia House Public Safety and Homeland Security committee. The bill imposes two points onto the license of a driver who engages in wireless communications while using wireless telecommunications device requirements (text messaging).

Senate Bill 360 – the “Caleb Sorohan Act for Saving Lives by Preventing Texting While Driving” targets teens who have two or more convictions of driving while distracted within 12 months by restricting their eligibility to receive a Class C and Class D driver’s license. The bill further proposes to impose a fine of not more than \$150.00 for any conviction of a violation of the proper exercise of a vehicle based on the use of a mobile phone for “writing, sending, or reading a text based message or other purpose unrelated to engaging in spoken communication”. SB 360 (sponsored by Sen. Jack Murphy – 27) passed the Senate with unanimous support on March 18 and has been assigned to the House Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security.

National and State Prevention Efforts 2010

Expectant mothers are getting a new tool to help keep themselves and their babies healthy: pregnancy tips sent directly to their cell phones. The “text4baby” campaign is the first free, health education program in the U.S. to harness the reach of mobile phones. Wireless carriers including AT&T, Verizon and Sprint have agreed to waive all fees for receiving the texts. Organizers say texting is an effective means of delivering wellness tips because 90% of people in the U.S. have cell phones.

Studies in other countries have shown that periodic text messages can reduce smoking and other unhealthy behaviors in pregnant mothers. Under the new service, mothers-to-be who text "BABY" to 511411 will receive weekly text messages, timed to their due date or their baby's birth date. The messages, which have been vetted by government and nonprofit health experts, focus on a variety of topics critical to maternal and child health: immunization, nutrition, seasonal flu, prenatal care, emotional well being, drugs and alcohol, labor and delivery, smoking cessation, breastfeeding, mental health, birth defects prevention, oral health, car seat safety, exercise and fitness, developmental milestones, safe sleep, family violence, and more. The messages will continue through the baby's first birthday. If you want to stop receiving messages from “text4baby”, you can text STOP to 511411. If you want to start the messages again, you will have to re-register by sending BABY to 511411 (BEBE to 511411 for Spanish messages). Visit www.text4baby.org for more information.



April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. According to the Child Welfare League of America, there are ten things you can do for Child Abuse Prevention Month:

- 1) Volunteer your time
- 2) Discipline your children thoughtfully
- 3) Support prevention programs
- 4) Know what child abuse is, and what the signs are
- 5) Report abuse [In Georgia, if a child is considered to be in immediate danger, the police should be called. Otherwise, a report should be made to the local DFCS office in the county where the child lives. For Georgia information, go to www.dfcs.dhr.ga.gov]
- 6) Invest in kids
- 7) Write, visit, fax, phone, or e-mail your elected officials
- 8) Participate in ceremonies to memorialize children
- 9) Raise public awareness
- 10) Support the Children's Memorial Flag Postage Stamp Initiative

For more information, go to www.childwelfare.gov

Together
Everyone
Achieves
More

Please submit your stories of success or other ideas by **June 11, 2010** to:
OCA– Division of Child Fatality Review • 55 Park Place - Suite 410 • Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Phone: 404-656-4200 or Fax: 404-656-5200 or Email to: ocacfr@oca.ga.gov

Upcoming Events

- **April 16-19, 2010** - National CASA's 29th Annual Conference "Spring into Action" in Atlanta, GA. Visit www.casaforchildren.org for more information.
- **June 6-10, 2010** - The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Annual Conference in Portland, OR. The conference connects public health epidemiologists from across the country and includes sessions on surveillance, occupational health, immunization, injury control, and maternal/child health. Visit www.cste.org for more information.
- **June 21-23, 2010** - Head Start's 10th National Research Conference in Washington, DC. Visit www.headstartresearchconf.net for more information.
- **July 14-16, 2010** - National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN.
- **September 12-14, 2010** - 11th International Conference on Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma in Atlanta, GA. Visit www.dontshake.org for more information.
- **September 26-29, 2010** - International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) International Congress in Honolulu, HI.
- **November 6-10, 2010** - American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting in Denver, CO.

Important Information for YOU

- The updated State Model Child Abuse Protocol is now available for you to use in your communities. The revised edition contains information on mandated reporting, school abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, and special needs children. Please contact us if you would like to receive a copy (404-656-4200 or ocacfr@oca.ga.gov). Per CFR legislation, all county child abuse protocol committees are required to "meet at least semi-annually for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the protocol and appropriately modifying and updating same" (O.C.G.A. 19-15-2).
- If you were unable to attend one of the ten trainings offered by CFR staff between February and April 2010, please know that we are working to offer up to three more trainings during the summer for you. These trainings are mandatory for all CFR committee members, so please contact us if you need an additional training date in your area.
- The Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) Case Registry pilot project is being received very well by county committee members. The investigation questions on the required forms are being completed and submitted timely to our office. Please contact us if you have any questions or issues relating to the SUIDI/coroner form or the web-based CDR reporting form, so that we can address your concerns as soon as possible. We welcome your suggestions to make this Case Registry pilot project as efficient and effective as possible for all of us.
- In 2009, the Child Fatality Review Panel voted to convene three ad hoc workgroup for the purposes of researching and addressing selected critical issues relating to child safety and injury/fatality prevention: drowning, motor vehicle-related, and the Safe Place for Newborns Act.
 - The "drowning prevention" workgroup is collaborating with Beverly Losman and Safe Kids Georgia. The SKGA board has met and adopted this as a primary project for 2010, which includes providing marketing support to do a mass media campaign.
 - The "motor vehicle" workgroup is currently working on identifying existing public/private teen driving programs, initiatives, and resources throughout the state of GA. By conducting an "environmental scan" of such programs and initiatives, the workgroup can focus on identifying gaps in service delivery statewide.
 - The "Safe Haven" workgroup has recruited a team of public health research students at the University of Georgia who will review past data for trends in infant abandonment and identify missed opportunities for increasing awareness in the community. The findings from this research will be considered by the Panel for use in the 2011 legislative session.

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