



“The Review” Office of Child Fatality Review

2008 Awards for Fatality Investigation Team, CFR Committee and CFR Coroner

The **Rome Judicial Circuit** was awarded the **2008 Child Fatality Investigation Team of the Year Award**, which recognizes outstanding investigation and prosecution efforts by a multi-disciplinary team. In addition to demonstrating outstanding teamwork in child abuse investigations, the jurisdiction collaborated with Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta to develop a model protocol for cases involving suspicious head trauma in children. Additionally, Assistant District Attorney John Tullie served as the first prosecution mentor in a pilot project of the Child Fatality Investigation Program. In this capacity, Mr. Tullie provided support and assistance to other multi-disciplinary teams from around Georgia.



Photo (from left to right): Rachele Carnesale (Georgia CFIT Director), Stephanie Hill-Hudson (Inv. Rome Police), Ernie Studard (Deputy Coroner), Teri Davis (Floyd County Police), Beth Dabbs (Victim Witness Coordinator), John Tullie (Assistant District Attorney) and Steve Cox (Senior Assistant District Attorney) - May 19, 2009

CFR Committee of the Year, 2008—Richmond County

Richmond County CFR added several members outside of the mandated membership to help improve the commitment, including a fire marshal and a representative from the Board of Education. This committee is very active in the community with members participating in events such as parenting workshops on infant mortality, addressing the child murder rate, and gang related violence. Gang violence and juvenile homicide prevention presentations were also delivered to elementary, middle, and high schools, and the committee developed Safe Sleep prevention programs, including an eye-catching, Safe Sleep message T-shirt, which they wear to prevention events.



Photo of Dr. Boyle (3rd from left), CFR staff, and Rockdale County Commissioners—June 23, 2009

2008 CFR Coroner of the Year, Stephen Boyle, M.D.—Rockdale County

Dr. Boyle runs a very well organized office, paying special attention to detail, multi-faceted teamwork and investigation protocols. He takes great pride in ensuring his office communicates to all parties involved in child death investigations. He is careful to have his staff communicate information on “out of county” deaths by contacting the counties that should be the lead. Dr. Boyle is always available and provides needed information when asked.

Interview and Investigation Guides now Available

OCA-CFR has partnered with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) and the GBI Child Abuse Investigative Support Center to develop an updated guide to improving infant death scene investigations and interviews. This pocket-sized guide is laminated for easy storage, and contains many helpful interview and investigation tips for law enforcement, coroners and first responders at infant death scenes.

These portable, pocket-sized guides will offer tips on performing death scene doll re-enactments, photographing evidence, interviewing families and caregivers, and suggest red flags and inconsistencies that may signal child maltreatment. There is also valuable information for families about the crime victims’ compensation program.

The pocket-sized guides are free for you, and will be shipped in a standard letter-sized envelope. If you would like to order these handy investigative guides for your staff (max order of 3), please contact CFR staff at 404-656-4200.

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Policies in Georgia: Bullying

A regular feature of this newsletter is to inform you of policies and regulations around certain products and activities that may affect you and the work that you do with children and families. In order to bring you the most up-to-date information on rules, requirements, and policies enacted to keep kids safe from injury and death, we will be researching a different topic in each issue. If you would like to contribute to this article series at any time, please contact CFR staff.

Bullying can occur in schools and anywhere children interact. According to Georgia Code 20-2-751.4, bullying is: (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

The Code section requires each local board of education to adopt policies to prohibit bullying and apply penalties against those who bully. These policies are applicable only to students in grades 6-12, and should prohibit bullying of a student by another student. The policies should also require that a student who is found to have committed the offense of bullying for a third time in one school year should be assigned to an alternative school. Schools should include the information of policies and penalties in student and parent handbooks, and the local boards of education should ensure that both middle and high schools have the policy and penalty information posted.

There are currently no Codes in Georgia law relating to cyber-bullying, verbal or emotional bullying (without an explicit threat of bodily harm or injury), or bullying in grades K-5. A local school board may choose to adopt specific policies or procedures to address these issues, but it is not currently required by law. For more information on the Georgia Code, please visit the Georgia General Assembly website at www.legis.state.ga.us.



For more information and resources on bullying for parents, children, and communities, please call the Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Hotline at **1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373)**. The Helpline is available Monday through Friday, from 8am to 8pm. You can also e-mail the Helpline at helpline@pcageorgia.org. A link to the Prevent Child Abuse Georgia “Parent Guide to Bullying Prevention” quiz is available on the CFR website (click on the “newsletters” link).

New Child Death Reporting Form Available

Thanks to everyone who participated in the CFR webcasts regarding the CFR reporting conversion process. As a reminder, all child deaths that occur in 2009 and forward will need to be reported using the new online form. Official county access to this form will be available in late summer 2009.

Access to the new reporting form will be provided via a **username and password** for each county designee. The confidentiality form that was sent out to county CFR chairpersons and/or their designees should be returned to your Program Manager as soon as possible in order for you to receive your username and password log-in information. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this transition process, please let us know.

This process is a transition for all of us; however the end results will benefit each of us greatly, especially in reporting of child death trends in your area.



How to Identify Medical Deaths for Review

According to the legislative statutes that govern the Child Fatality Review process in Georgia (O.C.G.A. 19-15-1 through 19-15-6), medical deaths to children are eligible for review if the death was from an unexpected or unexplained condition, if the death was sudden when the child appeared to be in good health, or if the child became ill outside of the immediate care of a physician. We receive many reports of child deaths that fall into one or more of these categories, but not all eligible medical deaths to children are being reviewed and reported by county CFR committees. It is our hope to have 100% of eligible child medical deaths identified and thoroughly reviewed by 2010.

While CFR does not require reviews of those deaths that are expected or deaths that occur while the child was in hospice care, many child medical conditions can be considered eligible for review, even those illnesses and conditions that develop as a result of previous injuries or illnesses. Committees should consider the following four questions to determine if a child's death is eligible for review under CFR guidelines:

1. Did the child appear to be in "usual" health before the condition unexpectedly developed?
2. Did the child develop the condition suddenly or while at home, and visit a doctor or hospital later for treatment?
3. Could the child have survived the condition with early or adequate medical care and/or medicines?
4. Is this condition something that could be managed or treated with early or adequate medical care and/or medicines?

If you answer YES to any one of these four questions, the death may be considered eligible for review under CFR guidelines. If you have other questions about medical deaths and review criteria, please contact a CFR Program Manager at 404-656-4200.

We hope to improve the identification and notifications of child medical deaths for CFR committees with the passage of HB 64, signed by the Governor on April 21, 2009. HB 64 requires hospitals to immediately notify those coroners or medical examiners *where the act or event resulting in death first occurred*. Previously, hospitals were only required to notify the coroner in the county where the death occurred (i.e. where the hospital was located). This bill should help give more coroners and CFR committees immediate access to information about child deaths, especially medical deaths, that occur in hospitals outside of the child's residence county.

County Prevention Efforts in 2009

- Gwinnett County has completed their Suicide Prevention protocol for the school system, where members of the CFR committee had an active role in preparing the draft. Congratulations to this great teamwork approach. Gwinnett County is also in the beginning stages of developing a partnership with an outside agency to offer thorough heart screenings for youth involved in athletics. The committee's goal is to build a relationship with the community and hopefully get sponsorships for free screenings for those who can not afford them.



- Cherokee County is working on Safe Sleep messaging for their local community. They are performing data collection and partnering with First Steps to collect information on infant sleep environments. The committee's goal is better messaging and crib distribution.

- The cost of cribs used in the Georgia Division of Public Health Crib Matching Program will increase on July 1, 2009 from \$68.50 per crib to \$72.40. This increase is due to the vendor Mercury Distributing having to increase the price of freight and shipping charges. If your agency is interested in participating in the Crib Matching Program or purchasing more cribs, but cannot afford the current or increased price for the cribs through the vendor, please contact Monica Barnett at the Division of Public Health, Office of Birth Outcomes at mlbarnett@dhr.state.ga.us or by calling (404) 657-3139.

Together
Everyone
Achieves
More

Please submit your stories of success or other ideas by **September 11, 2009** to:
OCA– Division of Child Fatality Review ● 55 Park Place - Suite 410 ● Atlanta, Georgia 30303
www.gacfr.dhr.georgia.gov

Upcoming Events

July 29-31, 2009: The National Association of City and County Health Officials will have their Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida. The theme is “Working Across Sectors to Leverage Investment in Communities”. Registration and fee information can be found at www.naccho.org.

August 3-5, 2009: The National Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools will host their Annual Conference at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, MD. There is no registration fee for this event, but you must register before July 10. Visit their website at www.osdfsnationalconference.com for more information.

August 11-13, 2009: The National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing and Media will be held at the Omni Hotel in Atlanta. Registration is \$430 or \$225 for students. Visit www.cdc.gov for more information.

The Georgia Commission on Family Violence will NOT be hosting its Annual Conference this year.

August 22, 2009: The Southeast AIDS Training and Education Center is partnering with CDC and DHHS to present “Women: A National Conference” at the Loudermilk Center in Atlanta. This free, one-day conference will enhance understanding of how women’s health and well-being are influenced by HIV and violence against women. To register, call 404-727-2011 or send an email to rdennis@sph.emory.edu.

October 26-28, 2009: The National Environmental Public Health Conference will be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Atlanta. The conference will share research and program information on healthy people in a healthy environment, and include workshops on community and housing, sustainability and energy, and health emergencies. To register, visit www.cdc.gov or www.team-psa.com/2009nepc.

Due Dates and Timelines

- The new OCA-OCFR address is **55 Park Place, Suite 410, Atlanta 30303**. The direct office phone number is **(404) 656-4200** and the fax number is **(404) 656-5200**.
- All county fatality review reports for child deaths that occurred in **2008** should be submitted by July 31, 2009, using our online reporting form. This can be found on our website at www.gacfr.dhr.georgia.gov. If you have any problems using the CFR online reporting system or if you need more information to complete your committee reviews, please contact your Program Manager (Wende Parker at 404-656-4238 or Malaika Shakir at 404-656-4239).
- OCA-OCFR is soliciting requests for revisions to the current State Model Child Abuse Protocol. If you would like to provide ideas or suggestions to the re-write process, please contact Wende Parker at wrparker@dhr.state.ga.us.
- Check out the CFR website for federal or state grant funding opportunities for your prevention/education programs. Funding exists for child injury prevention, infant sleep safety, juvenile justice programs, HIV education, teen dating violence, and others. If you would like assistance with developing your grant application, please contact CFR staff.
- The Georgia Child Abuse Training Academy administrated by the Child Fatality Investigation Program will launch the first three-day Basic Team Training on **September 9-11, 2009**. The training will take place at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center, is free and is only open to multi-disciplinary teams enrolled in the Georgia Child Fatality Investigation Program of the Division of Child Fatality Review. Trainees can apply for travel and lodging expenses. Meals will be covered for all trainees. The faculty for this program is comprised of subject matter experts from the fields of law, medicine, child abuse prevention and law enforcement. The training covers the investigation and prosecution of sexual and physical abuse, child homicides and neglect. Teams will work to improve and update their local protocols to reflect changes in best practices and to function as coordinated units. Space will be limited. For further information, please contact Rachelle Carnesale at racarnesale@dhr.state.ga.us.

Division of Child Fatality Review
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"Branching out for Prevention"