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**Report to  
The Vermont Legislature**

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**Report of the Child Fatality Review Team  
2021 Report to the Legislature**

**In Accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 1561.**

**Submitted to:       The Vermont General Assembly  
                          Governor Phil Scott**

**Submitted by:       Commissioner Mark A. Levine, MD**

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                          Howard Center  
                          Interim Chair, Child Fatality Review Team**

**Report Date:        December 31, 2021**



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**INTRODUCTION**

Per 18 V.S.A. § 1561, the purpose of the Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) is to: (1) to examine cases of child fatality in Vermont in which the fatality is either unexpected, unexplained, or preventable; (2) to identify system gaps and risk factors associated with child fatalities that are either unexpected, unexplained, or preventable; (3) to educate the public, service providers, and policymakers about unexpected, unexplained, or preventable child fatalities and strategies for intervention; and (4) to recommend legislation, rules, policies, practices, training, and coordination of services that promote interagency collaboration and prevent future unexpected, unexplained, or preventable child fatalities. This report reflects the culmination of the CFRT’s work over the last reporting year in these focus areas.

**2020/21 ACTIVITIES**

**Covid-19 Response**

Due to the ongoing response to Covid-19, in which many team members are directly involved through their professional roles, the CFRT has only been able to meet virtually four times between September 2020 and August 2021. Accordingly, the CFRT’s work has been significantly curtailed during this time.

**Fatality Review Meetings**

In addition to the four CFRT meetings held in 2020-2021, the Executive Team held check-in meetings throughout the year to help maintain progress and focus, develop meeting agendas, and review best practices and resources for the team. In addition, some members attended workshops and meetings in conjunction with the [National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention](#).

*Table 1. Child Fatality Cases Reviewed (09/2020 - 09/2021)*

0	Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID)
4	Suicide
	1 - Hanging
	3 - Gunshot
1	Blunt Trauma – Motor Vehicle Accident
0	Natural
1	Undetermined
1	Drowning Accidental
0	Sudden Unexplained Death of a Child (SUDC)
<b>7</b>	<b>Total Cases Reviewed</b>

### **Legislative Proposal**

One of the limitations that the team has identified is that data sharing with other relevant institutions is prohibited under Vermont statute. As a result, the CFRT's ability to conduct comprehensive analyses, particularly with regards to comparative analyses using regional and national trends, is inhibited. The Department is working with legislators to propose a statutory change in the 2022 legislative session that would allow for data sharing between states and relevant institutions to better inform the CFRT's analyses.

### **Recommendations**

The CFRT will have recommendations in its 2023 legislative report.

### **FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

In 2022, the CFRT plans to do the following:

- Hold bi-monthly meetings to review cases and develop recommendations for prevention and systems improvements for the prevention of child death.
- Review cases of child homicides that have been released from the States Attorney's Offices. There are currently 13 of these cases that date back to October 2007 that the CFRT has not yet been able to review.
- Collaborate with the New Hampshire Child Fatality Review Team to determine how best to conduct joint reviews of cases where a Vermont child's death occurs in New Hampshire. There are currently 6 cases awaiting review under these circumstances.
- Establish a model for conducting joint reviews of cases where a Vermont child's death occurs out-of-state.
- Examine child deaths in the context of COVID-19 both as a direct cause of death, and as a contributing factor to overall health/mental health.
- Form topical subcommittees to review specific elements of cases and develop recommendations.

**ADDENDUM A – CFRT Members**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Title</b>
Allen, Chief Douglas	Chief of Police, Colchester Police Department
Bell, Rebecca MD	Pediatric Critical Care Physician, University of Vermont Medical Center
Borden, Sally	Co-Chair Vermont Citizen’s Advisory Board Executive Director, KidSafe Collaborative
Bundock, Elizabeth MD, PhD	Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Vermont Department of Health
Evans, Rob	Vermont School Safety Liaison Officer for the Vermont Agency of Education and Public Safety
Fassler, David MD	Child Psychiatrist, Otter Creek Associates
Hanson, Carolyn	Assistant Attorney General, State of Vermont Co-Chair, Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee
Haskins, Debby, MS, LADC	Center for Health & Learning, Suicide Prevention Specialist Association of Student Assistance Professionals, Board member
Hill, Cpt. Jeremy	Bureau of Criminal Investigation Commander, Vermont State Police
Katz, Benjamin	Detective Sergeant, Vermont State Police
Kerschner, Sally RN (Team Chair)	Maternal and Child Health/Injury Prevention, Vermont Department of Health
Leduc, Courtney, RN	RN Clinical Supervisor, Northwester Medical Center
Lucier, Kate	Assistant Attorney General, State of Vermont Director, AGP Department for Children and Families-Family Services Unit
McCorkel, Charlotte LICSW (Team Vice-Chair)	Senior Director of Client Services, Howard Center
McGivern, Lauri	Assistant Medical Examiner Coordinator Vermont Department of Health
Metz, James MD	Division Chief, Pediatric Specialty Center, Child Abuse Physician, University of Vermont Children’s Hospital
Miller, Nancy	Child Safety Manager Operations Division, Vermont Department for Children and Families
Patno, Karyn MD	Child Abuse Pediatrician ChildSafe Program/Clinic @ UVMHC VT Citizen's Advisory Board (VCAB)
Pine, Merrill	Program Manager, Emergency Medical Services for Children, Vermont Department of Health
Rettew, David MD	Medical Director, Department of Mental Health

Shapiro, Steven MD	Chief Medical Examiner, Vermont Department of Health
Trefry, Sharonlee RN	Nurse Program Coordinator, Vermont Department of Health
Wagner, Tracey, RN	Nurse Clinician-Child Safe Program, UVM Children's Hospital
Wells, Tanya	Injury Prevention Chief, Vermont Department of Health