

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Allen County Child Fatality Review (CFR) Board officially began reviewing cases on January 1, 2001. The following report represents the seventeenth full year of child death reviews by the Allen County CFR Board.

Ohio law mandates CFR Boards in all Ohio Counties or regions to review the deaths of all children under eighteen years of age. While the Ohio law requires the activity of the Board to be completely confidential, the Child Fatality Annual Report provides the community with information from the reviews of all deceased children who resided in Allen County in 2017.

The purpose of the Allen County CFR Board is to examine and review the cause of each death to be able to identify and make recommendations in regards to policy and program change and to prevent future child deaths in Allen County.

For 2017, the CFR Board reviewed a total of 15 deaths that occurred among Allen County children. The CFR Board reviewed all 2017 deaths. Historically, Allen County has experienced nine to twenty (9-20) deaths per year, as reported in the last five years of the reviews.

Key Findings

The largest number of deaths, 10 (66%) occurred within the first year of life. The percentage of African American child deaths (20%) in 2017 was higher than the percentage of the total African American population living in Allen County (12.6%) based on the 2016 U.S. Census data.

Of the 15 total child deaths in Allen County in 2017,

- 11 (73%) were males
- 4 (27%) were females
- 9 (60%) were White
- 3 (20%) were African American
- 3 (20%) were identified as Other
 - 2 (66%) Multiracial
 - 1 (34%) Hispanic/Latino

Manner of Death

Reviewed cases are categorized by manner and by cause of death. Manner of death is the classification of death listed in box 32 on the Ohio death certificate. The classification is limited to natural, accident, homicide, suicide, and undetermined. Listed below are the deaths that occurred in 2017 and how they were categorized by manner of death.

- Natural deaths accounted for 10 (66%) of the deaths.
- Accidents (unintentional injuries) accounted for 2 (13%) of the deaths.
- Homicides accounted for 1 (7%) of the deaths.
- Suicides accounted for 1 (7%) of the deaths.
- 1 (7%) of the deaths were of an undetermined, pending, or unknown manner.

Cause of Death

Cause of death is the classification of death listed in box 30 on the Ohio death certificate. Examples of causes includes, but are not limited to, birth defects, extreme prematurity, weapons, sudden infant death syndrome, cancer, cardiovascular, and other cause. The cause is then classified due to medical causes or external causes. In 2017, the reviews were classified as follows: 11 (73%) were due to medical causes and 4 (27%) were due to external causes.

Preventability

Of the 15 deaths that occurred in 2017, 8 (53%) were considered “probably not preventable”, 4 (27%) were considered “probably preventable”, and 3 (20%) could not be determined.

Board Recommendations

The majority of the recommendations are focused on increasing public awareness and educating the community on the importance of basic safety precautions, early prenatal care, and healthy lifestyle choices. Anyone in the community who encounters families and women of childbearing age can help support the following recommendations.

Pregnancy Related

- Increase education on premature labor warning signs and risk reduction
- Increase education on the importance of early and consistent prenatal care
- Increase support and education for healthy lifestyle choices before, during, and after pregnancy, including reducing use/exposure to tobacco before and during pregnancy
- Increase support for women to eliminate the use of alcohol and illicit drugs, especially during pregnancy
- Increase education on pregnancy prevention including safe sex and STI prevention

Parenting Related

- Increase safe sleep education using the ABC’s of safe sleep – infants sleeping Alone in their bed, placed on their Back to sleep, in a safe, empty Crib

Community Resources/Support

- Increase awareness of seat belt use while driving and teen driver education about distracted driving, maintaining safety in regards to speed, and curfew law for minors
- Increase awareness of traffic safety on rural roads
- Increase awareness of the warning signs of suicide
- Increase awareness and education on the misuse and abuse of prescription and illicit drugs and other substances
- Increase education and awareness of importance for regular and consistent medical care for chronic medical conditions