Child Death Review and Injury Prevention

Amy Flaherty
Pennsylvania Department of Health
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CDR Mission

To conduct a comprehensive, multidisciplinary review of child deaths, to better understand how and why children die, and use the findings to take action that can prevent other deaths and improve the health and safety of children.
(National Child Death Review)

CDR Partnership

• In Pennsylvania, the CDR program represents a partnership between the Department of Health, the Department of Public Welfare and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
Act 87

- Act 87 codified the Pennsylvania CDR Program into law effective January 6, 2009.

ACT 87

- Pursuant to Act 87, by September of each year, the State Public Health Child Death Review Team must submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly.

- This report shall detail the activities of the State CDR team, a summary of the reports of the local CDR teams and recommendations relating to the reduction of risk of child injury or death.

Key Components of the 2009 Report

- In 2008, 1,071 deaths were reviewed by local CDR teams.
- Of those deaths:
  - 62% were due to natural causes
  - 17% were accidental
  - 11% were homicide
  - 3% were suicide
  - 3% were undetermined
Natural Deaths

• The majority of the deaths reviewed in 2008 were natural deaths. 74% of the natural deaths reviewed occurred in infants less than one year of age with the most frequent cause of death being prematurity.

Natural Deaths, continued

• 80% of all natural deaths occurred in children less than 4 years of age

• 50% of the natural causes of death in children under the age of one year of age were due to prematurity

Accidental Deaths

• 60% of all accidental deaths occurred in youth ages 15 to 19
Accidental Deaths, continued

- Fire/burn/electrocution, drowning, asphyxia, and fall or crush deaths peak early (< 4 years of age) whereas motor vehicle and poisoning/overdose/intoxication deaths peak in the 15 – 19 year age range.

Motor Vehicle Deaths

- Motor vehicle deaths are the most prevalent cause of accidental deaths
  - 79.2% of motor vehicle deaths occur between 15 to 19 years of age

Motor Vehicle Deaths, continued

- In the 2008 review period, 103 deaths occurred as the result of motor vehicle accidents
  - Nearly half of these deaths occurred on rural roads
  - The decedent was twice as likely to be the driver as the passenger
Motor Vehicle deaths, continued

- Males are twice as likely to be the driver
- 83% of the motor vehicle decedents were white, 13% were African American
- In 29% of these deaths, shoulder seat belt protection was available but not utilized

Homicide Deaths

- During the 2008 review period, there were the 122 homicides
- This makes homicide the third largest category (11%) of manner of death of Pennsylvania child fatalities reviewed

Homicide Deaths, continued

- Of the 122 deaths, 96 deaths or 79% occurred in the 15 to 19 years age range
- The primary cause of death related to homicide is weapon related (91%)
Preventability

- When a local team performs a review, one of the goals is to determine if the death was preventable.
- Of the 2008 deaths reviewed, 23% were deemed preventable.
- It is often a challenge for teams to determine if a death was preventable, particularly in the case of natural deaths. This can be due to lack of information and unknown prematurity-related causes.
Prevention Initiatives

- Infant Safe Sleep Campaign
- Teen Driving
- Injury Prevention
- Farm safety
- Suicide Prevention Initiatives
- Premature Births Sub-group