



Washington C. Hill, MD, FACOG

Chair, Committee on Perinatal Mortality and Morbidity

Committee on Perinatal Mortality and Morbidity Report

One of the many roles of ACOG District XII's Committee on Perinatal Morbidity and Mortality is to reintroduce you to the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Program and ask for your support. The FIMR Program is a community-owned and action-oriented process to improve service systems and resources for women, infants, and families. This evidence-based process examines fetal and infant deaths, determines preventability, and engages community to take action.

The process engages a multidisciplinary case review team to review de-identified infant and fetal deaths that includes a maternal interview for consumer perspective on why the death occurred. Meetings last about an hour. The case review team typically includes healthcare providers, obstetricians, social workers, mental health professionals, and health department staff. Based on these reviews, the case review team makes recommendations to improve any system gaps. A community action team is then assembled to take these recommendations and put them into action. The community action team is usually comprised of community members, elected officials, and other key leaders who can implement change. They work with at-risk families and other partner agencies in the region

to implement and develop street-level outreach activities.

The FIMR was established in 1990 by Ezra C. Davidson, MD, past ACOG president. The National Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (NFIMR) Program is a collaborative effort between the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention. The national resource center has several publications, guides, and technical materials to support and sustain FIMR programs. The FIMR process is used primarily in areas with high infant health disparities and identifies service gaps in some areas in Florida. It is not about assigning blame, but rather an examination of the circumstances surrounding the death to help identify what went wrong and ultimately help improve and prevent fetal and infant deaths in the future.

The FIMR data informs a continuous quality improvement process. The case review data is used to identify issues and gaps in service systems that may contribute to fetal and infant deaths, and may be used to augment community needs assessments and help analyze root causes of infant health disparities. Actions taken based on recommendations from these case reviews are monitored and their effectiveness tracked. A new NFIMR database provides the ability to aggregate

case information, recommendations, and actions taken. The NFIMR Program can help you establish a FIMR program in your community but also needs your support and involvement. NFIMR's national resource center offers several publications, guides, and technical materials to support and sustain your local state FIMR program here in Florida.

Use NFIMR's map on their website (www.nfimr.org/programs_map) to search for and contact FIMR programs in your region here in Florida. They need your help.

Florida adopted the FIMR model in 1992 and there are 12 FIMR projects statewide organized and funded by the state of Florida. You can be involved in one of them or start one. Some of the Florida FIMR projects are:

- A strategy to close the gap in health disparities at the community level
- A timely and valuable source of information about changing healthcare systems and how they affect real families trying to access them
- A form of continuous quality improvement that allows communities to assess the performance of systems and the impact of changes in those systems
- A voice for local families who have lost their baby
- A tool that helps local health officials implement policies to safeguard families

Member Connection

The Fetal and Infant Mortality Review projects are countywide efforts to better understand the issues associated with fetal and infant mortality and morbidity and to develop strategies that improve perinatal systems of care, locally and statewide. Everyone is against fetal and infant death.

The FIMR identifies strengths and areas for improvements in overall services systems and community resources for women, children, and families. The FIMR also provides direction toward the development of new policies to safeguard them. District

XII reminds you that your help as well as the help of your colleagues is needed. For more information, visit www.nfimr.org, call 202-863-2587, email nfimr@acog.org, or contact Jodi Shaefer, director of NFIMR at jshaefer@acog.org. ■