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Dear Clerk Hurley,

I am pleased to submit to you the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Child Fatality Review Annual Report. Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 38 Section 2A, the report highlights the work of the State and Local Child Fatality Review Teams in FY23.

The FY23 Annual Report describes the increase in child fatalities from 390 child and infant deaths in 2020 to 397 in 2021. While child and infant mortality rates remained well below the national average, the Child Fatality Review Team will continue to monitor the rates of fatality and disparities in which children reach their 18th birthday.

The FY23 Annual report focuses on the quality improvement, training, and technical assistance provided to the Local Child Fatality Review Team, in response to the findings from the 2018 needs assessment. These XX included:

- A 12- month Community of Practice, which covered topics including: principals of racial equity, self-care, best practices in record collection, protecting confidentiality, facilitating fatality reviews, and identifying and documenting root causes of fatalities,
- Data profiles generated by DPH that explore jurisdiction specific Social Determinants of Health alongside infant and child fatality data, and
- The final draft of the first ever Local CFR Team Guidelines, which was approved by the State Team at the beginning of FY24, and provides basic operating standards to enhance consistency of local reviews across the Commonwealth.

The State Team is not issuing new prevention recommendations for FY23. An internal focus was necessary to improve the Child Fatality Review Program throughout the state and will result in improved processes and recommendations in the future. The report is attached to this email and is available for download here.

The State Child Fatality Review Team was established in 1999 within the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2023, the Office of the Child Advocate is providing administrative and operational support to the State Team, including submitting the statutorily required annual report. As the Child Advocate, I submit this annual report on behalf of the State Child Fatality Review Team.

Our office is happy to further discuss this report with you and/or your staff. Please contact Ari Fertig, Legislative and Communications Director, for any further inquiries at ari.fertig@mass.gov

We are grateful for your leadership and support for the children of the Commonwealth. I look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the lives of the children and families of Massachusetts.

Thank you,

Maria Mossaides
Director, Office of the Child Advocate