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Timothy Carroll
Clerk of the House
24 Beacon Street, Room 145
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Michael Hurley
Clerk of the Senate
24 Beacon Street, Room 335
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Sent via LAWS

Dear Clerks Carroll and Hurley,

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 38 Section 2A, I am pleased to submit to you the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Child Fatality Review Annual Report. The report highlights the work of the State and Local Child Fatality Review Teams in FY24, provides data on the state of child and infant fatalities in 2022, and presents recommendations for the purpose of child fatality prevention.

Although Massachusetts has one of the lowest child fatality rates in the country, in 2022 our state saw a troubling increase in fatalities, continuing a trend since 2020. The leading causes of these deaths include congenital malformations, unintentional injuries, and short gestation/low birth weight. Significant disparities remain in the demographics of affected communities, with boys, children of color, and those living in urban areas at higher risk.

Among these disparities is the finding that children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have an elevated risk of fatal drowning. Compared to their neurotypical peers, children with ASD face a 160-fold increased risk of drowning, often related to wandering or elopement behaviors.

The report offers recommendations for legislators and state agencies on how best to raise caregiver awareness, increase access to home modifications and adaptive swim lesson access, enhance educational and therapeutic support, and improve emergency preparedness and response. It also includes resource guides for caregivers and providers.

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.

Thank you,

Maria Mossaides
Director, Office of the Child Advocate