



## **Child Fatality Prevention Team: Board of Health and County Commissioners Cumulative Report 2022**

### **Purpose**

Local Child Fatality Prevention Teams (LCFPTs) consist of multidisciplinary members who spend time and effort reviewing the death of children, ages 0-17 years, who died (not of suspected abuse and neglect with Division of Social Services history) as a resident of their county. The local Child Fatality Prevention Teams (CFPTs) are required to advocate for system improvements and needed resources where gaps and deficiencies may exist and through the submission of a report annually to their local county commissioners (CC) and boards of health (BOH).

LCFPT review coordinators and chairs were asked to submit their reports provided to their local BOH and CC to the LCFPT program coordinator in 2023. The following report reflects all submitted reports and summarizes the findings.

### **Data**

#### **Report Submissions**

Seventy-six (76) counties responded to the request for submission with attachments of their reports to their local BOH and/or local CC. In addition, one county responded that they did not report to local BOH and/or local CC and, therefore, did not provide supporting attachments; five (5) additional counties noted they reported to their county commissioners and board of health but did not provide attachments with what was presented. Although outlined as a requirement in NC General Statute 7B as well as the agreement addendum with each county, eighteen (18) did not respond to the request for submission. Of the 18 non-responses, it is not known whether reports were made to their county leaders.

The data below reflects the responses from the 76 counties who submitted attachments of local BOH and/or local CC reports.

#### **Number of 2021 CFPT Meetings**

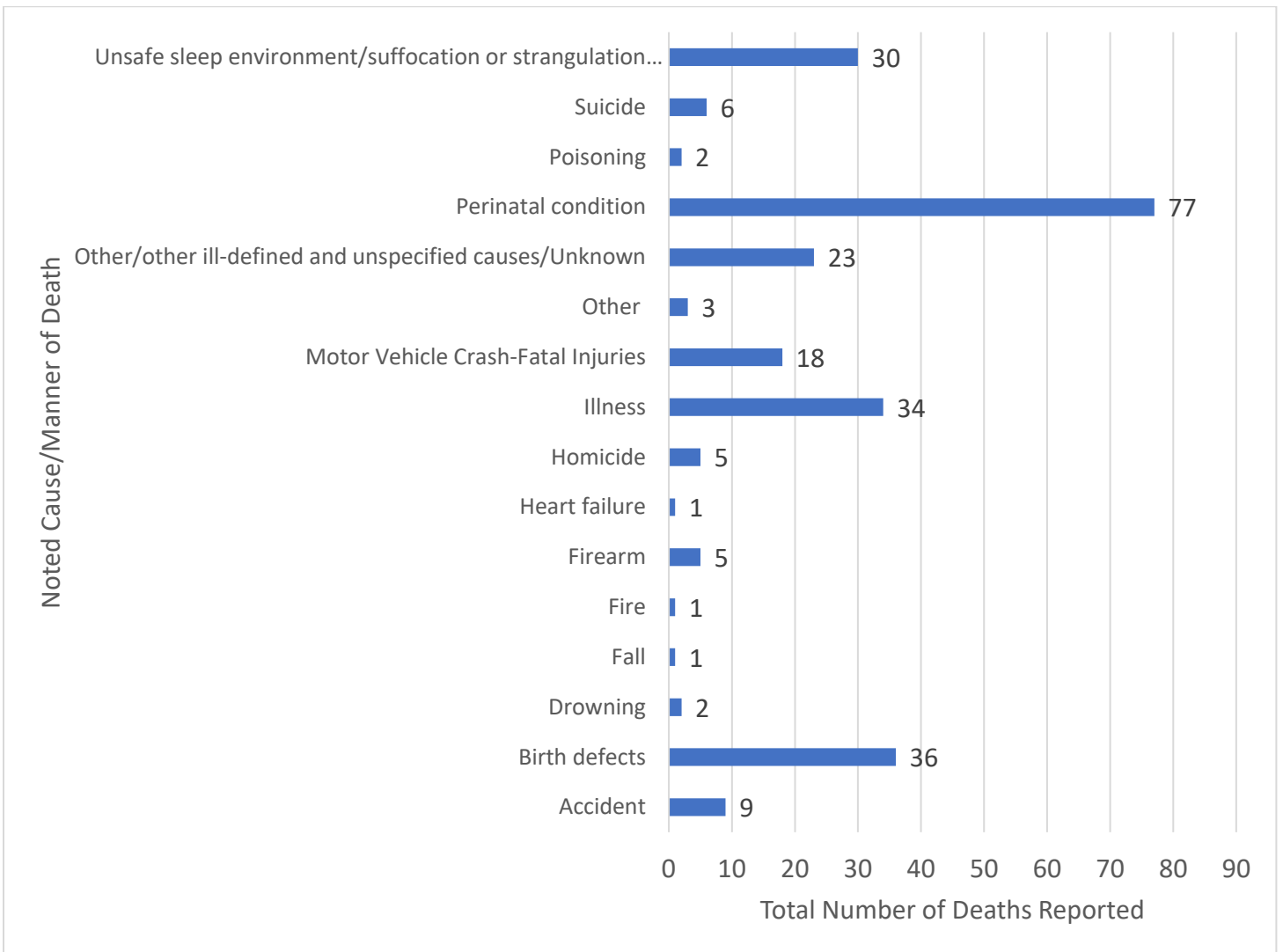
From the responding counties, 41 meetings were reported to have been held in 2022 for CFPT reviews. Of note, not every county's report to their CC/BOH included the number of meetings held by their team. However, this shows a fraction of the time and hard work that goes into the review of child fatalities.

Cause of Deaths Reviewed

Although a sample outline is provided for county reports to their local BOH and CC, LCFTs have discretion over what they include in their report. Those who included the number of cases reviewed by their team were added for a total of 606 cases reviewed across all counties.

Considering all submitted reports, the following data presented on Graph 1 displays noted case reviews by causes of death and Table 1 displays causes of death in alphabetical order; both represent the same data values. Representing only a fraction of all local CFPTs case reviews based on what data counties chose to share with their local BOH/CC leaders, total cases by cause of death totaled 253.

**Graph 1.** North Carolina, 2022 noted causes of death by total number of reported deaths



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**Table 1.** North Carolina, 2022 causes of death alphabetically, with number of reported deaths

Cause of death reported by local CFPT reviewers	Number of counties reporting cause of death among their reviews
Accident	9
Birth defects	36
Drowning	2
Fall	1
Fire	1
Firearm	5
Heart failure	1
Homicide	5
Illness	34
Motor Vehicle Crash-Fatal Injuries	18
Other	3
Other/other ill-defined and unspecified causes/Unknown	23
Perinatal condition	77
Poisoning	2
Suicide	6
Unsafe sleep environment/suffocation or strangulation in bed	30

Remaining fatality case reviews were either not associated with a provided cause of death or grouped. 141 fatalities were not disclosed by cause or manner of death but were noted to fall among the following causes/manners or death:

- Accidents
- Accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed
- Birth defects
- Congenital malformation of the heart
- Homicide
- Hydrops fetalis not due to hemolytic disease
- Infantile cerebral palsy
- Injuries due to motor vehicle
- Illness
- Illicit drug use during pregnancy or substance affected infants
- Other ill defined unspecified
- Perinatal condition
- Poisoning
- Prematurity
- SIDS
- Suicide
- Undetermined cosleeping

In addition to the number and types of deaths noted in the reports from LCFPTs, teams also shared identified problems, recommendations, and actions from their reviews as well as overall team accomplishments. These outcomes are noted in the following sections:

- A. System Problems
- B. CFPT Recommendations and Actions
- C. CFPT Accomplishments

## A. System Problems

A summary of identified system problems noted by LCFPTs in their reports to local BOH and CC are noted below. System problems identify a lack of or a need identified during the review of a specific child death review. Many similar system problems were noted by multiple teams.

- Lack of education regarding the dangers of BB and Airsoft gun use.
- Inadequate prenatal care.
- Youth suicide is a growing issue in the U.S. and parents/caregivers lack understanding of how to recognize and address suicidal thoughts in youth.
- Need for mandated reporting protocols between health care providers and law enforcement to DSS.
- Unsafe sleep/co-sleeping with parents/unsafe sleep environments.
- Gun violence, gang violence, human trafficking- Need for gun violence, gang violence, and human trafficking and prevention.
- Need for community education regarding hot car safety.
- Need to educate medical and other community providers on importance of substance abuse assessment for teen moms.
- Need to promote more awareness on using seat belts properly especially with youth.
- Additional educational material on gun safety needed at points of access to firearms and available for distribution at medical homes.
- Infant bed-sharing is a common, long-standing practice in many cultures. There is a lack of coordinated resources, education, and funding statewide related to the dangers of unsafe sleeping conditions for infants. The history and culture of bedsharing, combined with the lack of funding to sufficiently educate the public of risks, has allowed infants to continue to die from unsafe sleep conditions that could be prevented.
- There continues to be a lack of health insurance for many undocumented individuals (children included). This impacts the ability of individuals to access much-needed mental health services and substance abuse treatment.
- Community access to low/no-cost grief counseling after deaths of infants or youth for families appears to be limited, not easily accessible, and/or not well advertised.
- Language and cultural barriers may limit the ability of immigrant families and individuals to access services.
- There is a lack of sufficient services in the community for youth who have Autism Spectrum Disorder. The home environment for these youth can be unsafe when the youth and their families are not supported and educated on issues related to ASD.
- There continues to be a lack of affordable housing for families in Durham, and the Team has noticed a connection between a lack of stable housing and infant deaths due to unsafe sleeping conditions.

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- Professionals who work on issues related to child welfare and public health have highly stressful jobs and need to be well-supported for the benefit of those professionals and the individuals and families they serve. The turnover rate and difficulty in recruiting frontline workers impacts the most vulnerable individuals in the community and makes the load heavier for the frontline workers who remain.
- Local hospitals sometimes fail to report infants born exposed to substances, professionals in the community do not consistently report child maltreatment concerns.
- Local communities must identify meaningful strategies to expand and promote safe sleep.
- Need for a more comprehensive approach to suicide awareness and prevention.
- Youth transitioning from a hospital setting to outpatient care struggle to access appropriate care.
- Professionals must be better trained to recognize and respond to human trafficking, and child welfare systems need resources to better prevent and protect.
- Federal law does not permit the disclosure of substance abuse/mental health treatment information for child abuse investigations without a patient's written consent or a court order, which creates a significant obstacle for assessing risk and child welfare's monitoring of a family's progress.
- Medication-Assisted Treatment and overdose prevention--Medication-assisted treatment is a preferred method for treating opioid use disorders, despite benefits, methadone-related deaths in NC are on the rise. There is a need for more targeted overdose prevention strategies.
- Trauma from adverse childhood experiences can create intense fear and distrust of systems designed to support individuals and families. A trauma informed system of care is needed across a range of practice settings to ensure a healthy, more resilient community and improve individual outcomes.
- Bicycle helmet laws don't include helmet use for tricycles.
- Need for community education on regarding how to interact with a person with suicidal ideation and support for 'see something say something' educational programs.
- Lack of resources available for genetic testing prior to pregnancy (preconception) or early gestation (during pregnancy). There is a need for genetic testing to be more readily available to all women desiring pregnancy or already pregnant in order to detect genetic anomalies to help make the best healthcare decisions for their current or future pregnancies.
- The CCPT/CFPT has identified the following needs in the county where a service is not present or where expansion of a service is needed to address the issues adequately:
  - Lack of parenting skills such as supervision and discipline of children, arranging for basic medical care, and the provision of food and shelter
  - Drug Abuse (especially methamphetamine and heroin) and Alcohol Abuse
  - Domestic Violence
  - Mental Health and Substance Abuse-Related Diagnoses and Recovery
  - Golfcart Safety
- No local chronic disease support groups for parents in the county, must travel to larger city to attend most meetings.
- Lack of local endocrinology office.
- Dangerous stretch of road - dark, no guardrails.
- Education regarding Car Seat Installation.
- Education regarding Bicycle Safety.
- Substance Abuse Resources & Providers.
- Mental Health Resources & Providers.

- Placement Options for all children, especially those with behavioral concerns.
- Better communication between DSS departments in other counties with open cases.
- Cell phone usage while driving--Education to all drivers (targeting teens) regarding cell phone usage while driving.
- Lack of standardized and automatic law enforcement report to local DSS of a child death.
- Lack of resources/follow up when student has a history of threatening suicide.

## **B. CFPT Recommendations and Actions**

A summary of identified recommendations and actions taken by LCFPTs in their reports to local BOH and CC are noted below. Recommendations identified a suggested pathway of addressing the system issue and an action proposes or outlines what steps the LCFPT has taken or will take to fulfill the recommendation. Recommendations and actions have been modified to de-identify the associated county.

CFPT recommends:

- School system and local health providers should review and reinforce the importance of gun safety practices.
- Provide educational information to the community about the dangers of maternal tobacco use.
  - Action: The health department will feature information on the web and other social media about prenatal care and the dangers of maternal tobacco use, as well as continuing to provide information through the prenatal clinic.
- Provide educational information to the community about the importance of prenatal care and the dangers of maternal tobacco use.
  - Action: The Health Department will feature information on the web and other social media about prenatal care and the dangers of prenatal tobacco use, as well as continuing to provide information through the prenatal Clinic.
- A local safe sleep workgroup should reconvene to work on identifying promising practices related to community messaging about safe sleep, updating prior safe sleep campaign materials, and push these materials and messages out to the community, including through trusted community messengers and agencies/programs that interact with caregivers.
  - Action: The team chair attended a session with colleagues across the state at the NC Child Fatality Prevention Summit and learned how other counties have promoted safe sleep in their communities. The team chair will work with other team members to reconvene a local safe sleep workgroup to review this information, along with that of other resources and update a local safe sleep campaign.
- Local K-12 schools, Vaya Health, & NC Department of Health and Human Services should collaborate on a public awareness campaign about youth suicide, sharing information with parents & caregivers on how to identify the risks of suicide and how to respond to youth who have suicidal thoughts.
  - Action: The team sponsored a Youth Suicide Prevention Community Conversation event on May 17, 2023, which pulled together representatives from a variety of community agencies that serve youth. State and local data on youth mental health & suicide were shared with attendees who then generated ideas for community education & training opportunities and prevention,

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intervention and postvention efforts. These ideas will be shared with the team at a future meeting and action steps developed.

- Recommended grief counselling be provided to decedent's family members.
- Provide gun- and gang-related violence education and human trafficking education to the community. CFPT recommends that county leaders will continue to advocate for and support the need for the county to participate in these programs to educate the community regarding drug, gang, trafficking, and gun violence issues.
  - Action: Chairperson reached out to local Chief of Police to learn about participation in DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), Project Safe Neighborhood, and GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training). Chairperson reached out to colleague with NC Courts and requested education on human trafficking. Human trafficking (including sex & labor trafficking) educational materials, recommendations, and national hotline number for reporting was provided to all CFPT members for educational purposes and to share with other community members and alliances.
- Car seat safety/seat belt safety AND for community education regarding hot car safety.
  - Action: Email sent to Safe Kids for education assistance regarding hot car safety-continue providing car seat safety checks and seat belt education for county AND Community education regarding hot car safety to share. There are currently 3 fire departments that provide car seat safety checks. Local Atrium Health also provides car seat safety checks. Safe Kids Coalition hosts 3 free events each year to advertise/promote car seat safety in the community. Safe Kids Coalition also uses social media and provides brochures and packets to local daycares and schools. Every 1st grade class in the county is taught "Kid Tips Training" for child passenger safety. Law enforcement periodically has "click it or tick it" check points. Safe Kids Coalition provides hot car safety demonstrations and education. County Public Health Center shared educational materials on social media websites including Facebook & Instagram. Shared with CFPT & CMARC.
- DSS and law enforcement should be educated on recommendations for filing reports when a child death occurs in a home and other children live in the home.
  - Action: County DSS program manager filed a new report for investigation of the home and reached out to local law enforcement to educate on importance of making reports to DSS when a child fatality occurs & other children remain in the home. Suicide prevention training called QPR (an evidenced based program) is currently being taught by health education staff at the county Public Health Center. All health department staff have been trained and training is now being offered to outside staff such as DSS and other organizations interested in the training.
- Provide families with resources for cribs/Pack 'n Plays and information about safe sleep.
  - Action: Contact EPIC center, HD and OBGYN offices to suggest safe sleep education be implemented into birthing and parenting classes, have a parent share their testimony on losing their child due to co-sleeping/unsafe sleep.
- Work with parents to understand risk factors to infants due to improper sleeping arrangements- Educate hospital and pediatricians on referrals to family connects in-home nurses can monitor risks seen in the home and provide ongoing education to parents.
- Promote more education from medical practices on use of substances by pregnant moms and those who have infants.

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- Action: Ongoing education on safe sleep-provide safe sleep magnets to parents to display in the house and referral to Family Connects and Triple P, as appropriate.
- Promote more awareness on using seat belts properly especially with youth. Include education in schools and other community settings on seat belt safety.
- Include education on risks of using any type of drugs/alcohol especially when riding a bike or car, include information on road safety practice safe driving and riding to address in bicycle and drivers ed; work with schools to ensure information on risks of substances and using cars/bicycles/waking down the road .
- Evaluate information that could be included in school records that might shed more light on risk factors for youth when transitioning from one family to another. Work with schools and others on how to educate youth on risks from posting things on social media.
  - Action: CFPT and CCPT members continue education efforts on impact of trauma and discussion of strategies to have community promote supports for youth that could highlight suicidal ideation.
- Distribution of educational material on firearm safety at community outreaches, gun stores, and gun shows where firearms are purchased.
  - Action: Firearm safety fliers will be developed and distributed at community outreaches and available to community partners.
- County CCPT/CFPT convene a subcommittee to explore strategies and solutions to reduce infant mortality rates and improve safe sleep practices within the community.
  - Action: CCPT/CFPT created a subcommittee to address safe sleep issues in 2022, and the recommendations related to safe sleep issues in this report stem from the work of that subcommittee.
- To improve access to care and ensure increased funding for behavioral health services.
  - Action: The joint CCPT/CFPT will advocate for Medicaid expansion in North Carolina.
- To support and continue funding for the valuable resources of a Family Navigator. The Family Navigator serves as a liaison between DSS, DJJ, and the Local Management Entity-Managed Care Organization (LME-MCO) and acts as a liaison for families receiving child welfare services and are engaged with or needed to be linked with other systems of care within the community.
- Dedicate a line item in the county budget to support a reduction in infant deaths related to unsafe sleep. The money would be spent on: (1) a public awareness campaign through social media, radio, and television using materials already available (\$5,000-\$7,000+/per radio/tv campaign), (2) equipping Welcome Baby to work with local shelters and hotels to distribute portable cribs (\$3,000 per year) and to train staff to “see something, say something,” and (3) other safe-sleep specific programs pursued by the CCPT/CFPT Safe Sleep Subcommittee (\$3,000).
- Require all county contracts to include a provision that requires providers of direct services to families to undergo safe sleep training. Safe Sleep NC has free online training for community members and health care providers. This training was approved by the North Carolina Nurses Association and provides 1.5 contact hours.
- Support an educational campaign for obstetricians and pediatricians to include:
  - Best practice recommendations for no co-sleeping in hospital labor and delivery floors.



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- Encourage screening questions by any provider seeing a pregnant person in their 3rd trimester or a parent/caregiver with a child under 2 years old, like: "Is there a safe place for the baby to sleep?"
- Distribution to pediatricians and obstetricians statewide, via professional organizations like NC Pediatric Society, of Safe Sleep NC materials - that are produced for free by the Women, Infant and Community Wellness Section (WICWS) within DHHS.
- Encourage each hospital to identify a representative to investigate the National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification Program and determine its potential efficacy for their organization. Encourage each public safety agency within a jurisdiction (police, fire, and EMS) to identify a Safe Sleep Advocate and participate in the Cribs for Kids National Public Safety Initiative. Cribs for Kids Partners know how to identify families that need safe sleep support and provide them with cribs when needed.
- Encourage all child-serving professionals to view the video and pass the post-test for the Safe Sleep NC Video.
- Recommendations to address lack of access to services:
  - Work to offer a language access line for anyone interfacing with the county government.
  - Acknowledge the need for culturally appropriate services for immigrant families and children and work to find funding for such services (especially mental health and substance misuse services not covered by Medicaid); if funding is available but service providers are not, assign a small group of individuals to recruit providers to the county or to identify why providers cannot be enticed to come.
  - Acknowledge the need for services for intellectually disabled children (especially for those on the autism spectrum) and work to find funding for such services; if funding is available but service providers are not, assign a small group of individuals to recruit providers to the county or to identify why providers cannot be enticed to come.
  - Continue to address the housing crisis in the county with the added awareness that unstable housing may increase the likelihood of unsafe sleeping arrangement for babies, putting them at risk of death.
  - Create and maintain a county website and matching physical document that contain a list of all grief counselors and mental health providers in the county and surrounding areas that can be shared with families who have lost children at or around the time of loss; keep the list updated with information about hours, contact numbers, and type of insurance required.
- The Substance Affected Infant ("SAI") Policy should be examined for any unintended consequences as mandatory reports of substance affected infants are now being made to the county DSS frequently, as required by law.
- Recommendations related to gun violence and deaths:
  - Continue offering free gun locks and education in the county and support efforts to fund a statewide gun lock education campaign.
  - Continue to address gun violence with the understanding that the sudden, violent death of every child impacts that child's immediate and extended family, friends, classmates, and teachers, which in turn impacts the ability of those individuals to perform well in school and at work, and increases the need for accessible, quality mental health and substance abuse services.

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- Recognize the impact of gun violence on the education system. Students grappling with sudden, traumatic deaths of their peers may be less able to focus on academics. Our community needs to respond by increasing supports in the school system for educators and students by ensuring quick access to providers, such as school counselors, social workers, and nurses.
- Recommendation to address burnout and high turnover:
  - Provide training in secondary trauma and self-care for all employees of the county DSS, Public Health Department, and the Court system.
  - Take an anonymous survey of all forementioned employees to gather information on the nature and impact of secondary trauma on their lives and potential ways to mitigate any negative impact.
  - Explore the possibility of a four-day work week.
- The CCPT/CFPT makes the following recommendations to North Carolina state leaders to address systemic gaps:
  - Increase funding to address safe sleep issues across the state.
  - Provide funding for free gun locks and a gun lock education campaign, and support legislation to reduce youth access to guns.
  - Support the priorities and legislative recommendations of North Carolina's Child Fatality Task Force.
- Providing enhanced, targeted CPS reporting training to community professionals.
  - Action: In active communication with all hospital systems serving our county.
- Local communities must identify meaningful strategies to expand and promote safe sleep. While many parents practice safe sleep at the initial onset of sleep, many place their baby in the bed with them after nighttime waking. Medical providers do not always counsel regarding infant safe sleep. Some day cares do not consistently use safe infant sleep practices. Grandparents and other relatives sometimes advise parents to use unsafe sleep practices.
  - Action: Safe infant sleep awareness campaign expanded to include: education for several parent, community, and professional groups; targeted social media campaigns; developed and delivered mandatory safe sleep training for all child welfare staff partnerships with local first responder agencies, state agencies, and a national safe sleep organization. Assisted with developing statewide policy and procedures for all child welfare. Materials developed for our community shared with all NC counties for use in their efforts.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for NC youth between the ages of 10 and 18. This county needs a more comprehensive approach to suicide awareness and prevention. Youth transitioning from a hospital setting to outpatient care struggle to access appropriate care.
  - Action: Secured private funding to provide training for one local law enforcement agency.
  - Collaboration with partners and private providers to improve youth's access to needed mental health services.
- Professionals must be better trained to recognize and respond to human trafficking, and child welfare systems need resources to better prevent and protect.
  - Action: Incorporating human trafficking into CPS reporting training.
- Homeschooling can be a great choice for many children and families; yet in NC, a culture of leniency and lack of regulatory oversight places youth at risk of educational neglect and without safeguards in place to protect them. Without greater oversight, youth may not be receiving the necessary education and remedial education services they need. All youth deserve equal access to educational supports.

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- Action: The library has agreed to coordinate a safe meeting place, open to the public, to educate families about the special education services and grant opportunities available for private or home-schooled children. The school system has been asked to advise parents of the resources and grant opportunities available to them when youth are pulled from public schools to private or home-school.
- County DHHS encounters lengthy delays and challenges in accessing child protective services history from South Carolina DSS. Federal law does not permit the disclosure of substance abuse/mental health treatment information for child abuse investigations without a patient's written consent or a court order, which creates a significant obstacle for assessing risk and monitoring a family's progress.
  - Advocating to NCDSS to expand the border agreement to include SC and other bordering states.
  - Advocating for legislation that allows exceptions for child welfare to access confidential substance abuse records when determined necessary to ensure a child's safety.
- Medication-assisted treatment is a preferred method for treating opioid use disorders, despite benefits, methadone-related deaths in NC are on the rise. There is a need for more targeted overdose prevention strategies.
  - Action: Recruited and added opioid addiction treatment members to the CCPT and CFPT.
- A trauma informed system of care is needed across a range of practice settings to ensure a healthy, more resilient community and improve individual outcomes. Explore evidence-based trauma-informed trainings for social workers, mental health providers, teachers, law enforcement officers, and other human services professionals.
  - Action: Working with partners to make a list of trauma-informed professionals within the community available to the public.
- Death scene investigation--child welfare and law enforcement agencies commonly investigate child deaths. Agencies must properly train all staff to thoroughly investigate these deaths or near-deaths, as the information is critical to assessing safety and to prevent future child fatalities.
  - Action: Arranged and hosted child death scene investigations training through the OCME for all local law enforcement agencies.
- Provide educational information to the community about the importance of wearing your seatbelt anytime you are in a vehicle regardless if you are the driver or a passenger in any seating position.
  - Action: seatbelt education, seatbelt campaign with local Safe Kids Coalition.
- The bicycle helmet law should be altered to include tricycle use for young children.
  - Action: Team chairperson will make a recommendation to the state CFPT.
- Bolster safe sleep education via existing community partners.
  - Action: Completed educational material distribution project with materials in English and Spanish in partnership with the local Housing Authority.
- Education on safe firearm storage and access to lethal means.
  - Action: Collaboration with the county firearm safety coalition to support education and means of safe firearm storage.
- Education regarding how to interact with a person with suicidal ideation-support for 'see something say something' educational programs.
  - Action: Collaboration with local school systems to support existing educational programs for children and their caregivers on recognition and actions when faced with an individual in crisis.

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- Have genetic testing more readily available to all women desiring pregnancy or are already pregnant in order to detect genetic anomalies to help make the best healthcare decisions for their current or future pregnancies.
  - Action: Public Health staff to promote education to help empower patients and their families to make informed decisions; Explore non-invasive pregnancy testing (NIPT) options for our current clinic to offer; Quad screens currently offered on every patient and refer for further testing if desired or indicated.
- More education about safe sleep and the possible consequences needed.
  - Action: AWAKE children's Advocacy Center would like to donate funds to the Pack 'n Play program that was previously offered by the Department of Public Health; continue to promote safe sleep education at community events, the most recent being the community baby shower the county organizations collaborated on and held, advertise safe sleep on social media platforms where able. Run safe sleep articles in the local newspapers. We also plan to have articles translated into Spanish for our Spanish-speaking community.
- Increase awareness, resources and collaboration among community providers regarding services available in the community for pregnant women with substance use.
- Increase awareness and support for families on traveling safely with infants and children.
- Increase awareness about the dangers of drunk driving.
- Increase awareness on the dangers of Fentanyl use specifically within the community.
- Increase opportunities and community engagement related to children and bicycle safety efforts.
- Increase access to services, most of which are centrally located in the county. Develop and expand the public transportation system to include stops in parts of Western and Eastern County.
- Action: Data was collected in 2022 about transportation needs as it relates to Child Protective Services calls. Of the cases/families reported through Child Protective Services intake, 61% did not have a means of transportation at their disposal.
- Increase the number of families who can participate in parenting classes or counseling services. Additional funding is needed to assist indigent families, especially those at or just above the poverty line who are not eligible for Medicaid and who cannot afford the fees. Eligibility criteria would need to be implemented and sessions paid for based on attendance.
- Increase capacity of services needed in the community (i.e. drug and alcohol assessments, domestic violence services, sex offender services and specialty medical pediatric needs).
  - Action: A Substance Use Prevention Coordinator has been hired through the County Health Department and she has held community meetings and events to raise awareness of the issue.
- Recommend looking at drug testing and alcohol testing all victims and drivers in fatal MVA accidents.
  - Action: Recommendation to State Child Fatality Task Force that all persons involved in an MVA with fatality be alcohol and drug tested.
- Continue to educate the community on safe sleep and co-sleeping.
  - Action: CFPT team will do a community campaign on safe sleep. The Health Department will ask Smart Start to provide training on Safe sleep for infant and toddlers.
- Additional education materials to be ordered for local agencies.
  - Action: Materials to be distributed to DSS, Health Department, and local medical providers.

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- The team recommended Darkness to Light Training for homeless shelters staff. This would bring awareness and provide education on childhood sexual abuse to those who serve this vulnerable population.
  - Action: A team member has reached out to the Carousel Center to facilitate training for emergency housing shelters.
- Based on concerns for rising mental health needs among youth, we would like to bring awareness of the need for additional mental health services within our community. This recommendation was based on the concern that families are having to utilize patient services outside of our area.
  - Action: The team suggested we share this information with our local leaders in the annual report.
- Provide free car seats to any family in need, to include planning an event where anyone and everyone may receive education & training regarding proper installation.
  - Action: Grant writing in progress to be able to continue providing the free car seats & to fund the event.
- Provide free bicycle helmets to any family in need.
  - Action: Grant writing in progress to continue to fund for the upcoming year.
- County Joint Community Child Protection Fatality Prevention Team will explore a county-wide campaign to reduce stigma associated with mental health and substance use disorders. Additionally, the team should continue conversations with Vaya Health about the need to recruit more behavioral health programs and providers to the county to ensure a more comprehensive continuum of care from education and prevention through high intensity services.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) should continue its work to integrate physical and behavioral health to provide continuity of care for clients over time. The workgroup should further explore a universal system for sharing electronic medical records between healthcare providers, allowing physicians and clinicians to quickly access patient information and facilitate better clinical decision-making.
- In conjunction with other community agencies and partners, provide community education of mandating reporting laws, how to report, signs of child maltreatment, and the impact of child abuse and neglect across micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- Support distribution of Stewards of Children and Darkness to Light Training.
- County's network of health care providers and educators are encouraged to provide evidence-based health and sex education for all community members. Curriculum should teach youth and adults about safe touch, how to create and sustain safe, healthy and respectful relationships, what consent looks like, how certain factors influence sexual risk behavior, the benefits of being sexually abstinent, the efficacy of contraceptives, the importance of using contraceptives consistently and correctly, the importance of using a condom at the same time as another form of contraception to prevent both sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy, healthy communication and negotiation skills, goal-setting and decision-making skills, how HIV and other STIs are transmitted and the health consequences of each, how to influence and support others to avoid or reduce sexual risk behaviors, the importance of limiting the number of sexual partners, and how to access valid and reliable information, products and services related to sexual health and preventive care.

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- County Joint Community Child Protection Fatality Prevention Team should consider and evaluate ways to educate the public about the need for comprehensive health and sex education and explore ways to increase access to a range of birth control options.
- DHHS should consider re-implementing a service definition and funding for at-risk case management services for individuals with high ACES scores needing evidence-based interventions.
- Advocate for resources and a process for civil custody cases to undergo a more thorough evaluation of the parents or prospective custodian.
- County Joint Community Child Protection Fatality Prevention Team should consider advocating for, recruiting, and supporting the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based behavioral health interventions, such as parenting education, family therapy, and individualized treatment for children and families facing adversities and adults suffering from the effects of adverse childhoods. The team should additionally explore a public awareness campaign to build awareness of trauma and foster resilience within the community.
- DSS should consider advocating for expanding state funding for prevention, preservation and reunification services, especially in rural counties where resources are scarce.
- The team requested and received education by Daymark Recovery Staff in July 2022 on suicide prevention/community resources for children/teens.
- Continued safe sleep education.
  - Action: The team will seek and obtain education in SIDS and Safe Sleep for children in 2023 since this continues to be an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed. The team will continue to address any unsafe sleep conditions by making Pack 'n Play portable cribs available along with safe sleep education through the Books for Babies Program in partnership with the County Partnership for Children and Health.
- Provide educational information to the community about the importance of prenatal care.
  - Action: The health department will feature information on social media about the importance of prenatal care as well as continue to provide information through prenatal clinics.
- Provide educational information to the community about the importance of following Safe Sleep guidelines.
  - Action: The Health Department will continue providing Safe Sleep education in prenatal clinics and will begin featuring educational information and Safe Sleep guidelines on social media.
- Provide and promote education regarding seat belt usage; Education to all drivers (targeting teens) regarding cell phone usage while driving.
  - Action: The health department promoted an educational awareness campaign for safe driving to include importance of seat belt usage on social media platforms which reached 1,288 viewers.
- Promote car seat safety during and after pregnancy; Car seat safety checks by law enforcement
  - Action: Research hospital policy for education prior to discharge after birth; Identify resources for car seats for new parents; PSA's on car seat safety; Add member of NCSHP to our team; Information given to OBGYN providers and pediatricians; Confirmed that LEOs and Fire Departments do car seat checks; PSA's and information posted to social media accounts and disseminated to team.
- Raise awareness on importance of working smoke detectors and placing them in every bedroom

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- Action: Provide education to homeowners, landlords and tenants regarding safety issues with electrical issues; Fire Marshals present at the meeting and provided education on smoke detectors and how to get these at no cost through local fire departments.
- Provide educational information to the community about the importance of prenatal care.
  - Action: The health department will feature information on the web and other social media about prenatal care as well as continue to provide information through the prenatal clinic.
- Set up a telephone tree for children to call and get a ride home when under the influence for kids in rural areas.
  - Action: A students against drunk driving program has been implemented at our local high school.
- All child deaths should be reported to DSS, especially when other children reside in the home.
  - Action: A meeting has been set up between our chairperson and police chief. Perhaps a 'checkbox' to be included on the LE report to indicate LE has made a report to DSS.
- Provide resources to parents when a student has a history of threatening suicide.
  - Action: Chair of committee will discuss with school personnel the need for making parents aware of resources.

### C. CFPT Accomplishments

Within reports to the local county board of health and county commissioners, some local CFPTs decided to include their team's accomplishments throughout the year. Select accomplishments are listed below:

- The team continued to work on suicide prevention and mental health and also added ATV safety.
- Various team members continued partnering with the county's Overdose Prevention Coalition as schedules permitted.
- Health Educators regularly post information such as Safe Sleep and Suicide Prevention on social media.
- Mental Health First Aid Training opportunity was shared with an ask to forward to friends and family.
- Pack 'n Plays and smoke detectors were distributed through County Health Services CMHRP and CMARC staff.
- The team used their FY23 state funding to purchase 111 medication lockboxes for MAHEC's Project CARA to distribute to their clients.
- The team facilitated a Safe Sleep NC training in July 2022 on the updated American Academy of Pediatrics safe sleep recommendations and how to have meaningful conversations with parents to address any concerns or barriers they may have about the recommendations. This led to additional trainings for all Social Work staff and Hospital-affiliated pediatric and obstetric healthcare providers. Safe Sleep NC staff also were connected to Mary Benson House staff to provide safe sleep materials.
- County social work staff member spoke to the team about "Choose to Change", an intervention to help men who have engaged in violence recognize how their behavior is unsafe for their child(ren) and develop a support network to interrupt their violence and increase safety for their family.
- Program Director at Blue Ridge Healthy Families (BRHF) spoke to the team about the free, voluntary, comprehensive home visitation programs that BFHF provides for families who are pregnant or have recently delivered a baby with the goal of mitigating child maltreatment risk.
- Prior recommendations from the team that advocated for addressing community violence provided support to the County Justice Services Department's successful request for County Fiscal Recovery and

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US Department of Justice funds that are being used to implement a Community Based Public Health Response to Violence.

- Suicide Prevention and Mental Health resources and ATV Safety resources were the 2022 focus project.
- Staff member with Trillium provided the safeschoolshealthykidsnc.org website via email. The team was given information regarding resource: Educating Kids about Gun Violence.
- Medication lock boxes were distributed to law enforcement representatives and given out during some of the Health Department clinics. These boxes would help prevent children from accessing medicines that could potentially harm them.
- Various team members continued partnering with the County's Overdose Prevention Coalition as schedules allowed.
- Continued focus on safe sleep and received Ann Wolfe mini-grant to support continued safe sleep work
- Continuing community education through the CAPC on Darkness to Light and Monique Burr Safety Program--Darkness to Light – 267 community presentations; Monique Burr Safety Program – 1038 presentations.
- The team focused on mental health and suicide prevention. Trillium is a great partner and provided resources. The team discussed the overdose prevention coalition and received updates. Gun safety and cyber bullying were also discussed as projects. The team discussed resources and a new program to help with those called Healthy Opportunities. Discussed ways to develop new projects.
- Community education was provided and posted on the Health Departments social media websites regarding safe sleep, car seat and hot car safety, suicide prevention, and gun violence/gangs/drugs/human trafficking.
- The Team welcomed new members due to people leaving agencies or changes in duties and responsibilities within an agency. New members have been integrated into our processes and will continue to receive mentoring and guidance as they experience the Team activities. They are encouraged to attend trainings but also to read manuals from the State on Community Child Protection Teams and Child Fatality Prevention Teams.
- We are proud of the progress of protocols for working with Substance Affected Infants. There were two deaths of children this year but no involvement with DSS prior to the referral for those to DSS because of a child death. Of 217 referrals, 215 were screened in for services and only two were screened out. Based on the assessments, services were offered to the families with all being able to receive substance screenings and treatment based on the assessment in a timely manner.
- The Team was able to partner with a program operated by the Health Department: "Operation Buckle Up." This program is used to support families with limited resources. Families may receive assistance in purchasing Pack 'n Plays and car seats through the "Baby Store." They also receive education on safe sleep, environmental hazards, and other parenting skills. Those receiving car seats receive education from a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician. This partnership is contributing to public safety and reducing child fatalities.
- The 2022 Focus Topic was Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Resources and Vaping Education.
- Continue to give Safe Sleep Brochures to women at their initial Medicaid application visit.
- Health Department's Positive Parenting Program: Giving strategies to help parents build healthy relationships and manage their children's behavior. Classes have been well attended.



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- Purchased Pack ‘n Plays through County Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DCHHS) to promote safe sleeping and prevent deaths and injury from co-sleeping. The CCP/CFPT Coordinator attended Smart Start’s KidsFest event to promote safe sleeping and the Pack ‘n Play program.
- The CCPT/CFPT also attended and promoted water safety at the National Night Out this summer.
- The team focused on resources for Suicide Prevention, Mental Health, and ATV safety. The school district sent out information to school age clients at open house and start of school on Suicide, Mental Health Access, Vaping and ATV safety. The School District purchased videos about vaping and risks of vaping, and a new system was established with a sensor that will detect vaping in the school and send a message to a staff member to alert where in the building vaping is detected. The staff person can go to that area to investigate. The School District established a 10-day suspension from school if caught vaping and encourages the noted videos to decrease the 10-day suspension. Integrated Family Services were initiated back into the school system for students to obtain mental health services. This decreases the amount of time the student misses class, as well as offers care to a student when the student has no availability to be seen.
- Topics for child safety that were discussed included swim safety, lead poisoning prevention, elevated blood lead, car seat safety, peer support program, safe sleep and substance abuse/mental health education.
- Rebuilt the county CFPT/CCPT after COVID. Recruited new members to serve and retain current members.
- Child Abuse Prevention Month – flag raising ceremony and candlelight vigil.
- Awarded Family Room Foster Care Resource Center with a \$1000 grant to assist with buying twin mattresses for crisis placements for foster parents.
- CCPT formed a subcommittee to address Gun Safety due to the recent increase in homicides and suicides by firearms. The committee purchased gun locks to be dispersed to community partners to help reduce the number of injuries and fatalities of children.
- Provided Pinwheels to local Charter schools to plant gardens in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month.
- The Health Department continues to offer the Babies Easy Safe Sleep Training (BESST) and Baby Love Plus Fatherhood Efforts Program to provide Pack ‘n Plays to participating parents and caregivers.
- Child Safety Seat Classes are offered to parents/guardians of children up to 8 years of age or less than 80lbs at no cost.
- CFPT supported an article on gun safety that was submitted to the local newspaper that ran multiple times in 2022.
- The 2022 Focus Topic was Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Resources.
- Worked with the Housing Authority to distribute 1,225 pieces of Safe Sleep Education in both English and Spanish during their Toys for Tots drive.
- In conjunction with Safe Kids, distributed 750 smoke detectors to local fire departments for distribution in their communities.
- County Department of Public Health Maternal Health Clinic explored the option to add non-invasive pregnancy testing (NIPT) to the current offerings through our clinic for low- and high-risk mothers. We have not yet started but are close to being able to offer to all Maternal Health clients. Quad screens are still currently being offered and referrals for all positives are sent to MAHEC OB/GYN.
- An article was published in the local newspaper for Birth Defect Awareness month in January 2022.

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- Two bike events were held -- one at the greenway and one at the County Recreation Center - and served the community by offering bike safety education, helmet and bike fittings, learning to ride a bike. There were giveaways which included new bicycles and helmets.
- Two medication take back events were held - one in the spring and one in the fall - where a total of 50.6 pounds of medications were safely disposed of.
- The life jacket loaner stations throughout the county were stocked with more life jackets available for public use.
- Five Safe Summer events were held at various parks throughout the county and offered car seat checks, hot car display, bike safety, life jacket and swim safety, as well as gun safety. Various fire departments and law enforcement agencies were also in attendance.
- The Health Department purchased a car seat installation simulator to better protect the safety of the technician installing the car seat.
- The team continued to promote the distribution of prenatal packets to expecting mothers.
- The team facilitated coordination between the local hospital, Daymark Recovery Services, the County Health Department and Social Services to identify community resources for pregnant women with substance use disorder.
- The team discussed education and outreach information regarding drunk driving and seat belt safety.
- Engagement with Law Enforcement, Project Lazarus, Schools, Public Health and Social Services regarding the One Pill Can Kill campaign. Education and outreach to begin about the dangers of Fentanyl.
- The team participated in April-child abuse prevention handing out information placing signs and pinwheels to promote awareness of child abuse.
- Presentation was provided to our team, "How Opioids are affecting our Children" by Health Educator.
- The team collaborated with County Department of Health, to present to the community at outreach events, educational information to reduce child fatalities.
- After multiple firearm related deaths, gun locks, gun safety pamphlets, pistol cases, and key chains with the words 'Empty Chamber' were given at no charge to the public at multiple community events.
- CFPT state funds were used to purchase 10 portable cribs to be distributed to families with infants, ages zero to six months. Parents are instructed how to set up the cribs and provided extensive education on Safe Sleep Practices and ways to reduce Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The portable cribs were distributed by Health and Human Services workers with the CMARC team overseeing the distribution. The funding allowed cribs to be available for immediate use in emergencies for after-hours Social Workers when they identify an unsafe sleeping environment.
- Information on water safety was provided to CFPT members. Additional resources were shared by team members and will be distributed to the community via social media, school liaisons, etc.
- PEERS 5K walk/run to raise money to purchase Pack 'n Plays for families identified in need.
- The 2022 Focus Project was Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Resources for youth. The team distributed Mental Health brochures during Red Ribbon Week at the high, middle, and grammar schools.
- The team participated with other county agencies to help present the Maternal Health Expo that was held in the spring of 2022. Topics encompassed were car seat safety, smoking cessation, safe sleep, distribution of Pack 'n Plays , as well as overall wellness through healthy eating and exercise. The team distributed car seats, Pack 'n Plays and Safe Sleep "This Side Up" Onesies.

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- County's Economic Development and Tourism has a new publication, "The RoCo Blueway Guide." The publication can be picked up at the Governmental Center Reception Desk, the Economic Development and Tourism Department or you can download/print one off their website. The RoCo Blueway Guide includes location and distance of each of Rockingham Counties four rivers and three lakes; river access/exit points, locations of dams along the rivers, safety and planning tips and the dangers associated with traveling the rivers in Rockingham County. Our team has recommended a Spanish version of the guide for our Hispanic population. Also, our team has recommended the guides be available at the access/exit points and the local outdoor and outfitter rental facilities.
- Team ran an ad in local newspaper to provide community information about child abuse prevention, how to seek help, and what the pinwheels represent. Team also posted the proclamation on all of the county's social media platforms.
- Safe sleep billboard was on display for all county residents.
- Public service announcement on safe sleep were aired on WARR radio station and ads were posted on social medial platforms.

Beyond the requirement to submit a report to local BOH and CC, this information feedback loop provides a greater look at the responses, activities, and work of the LCPTs state-wide. Providing system problems, recommendations, actions, and accomplishments of teams across the state allows for shared ideas and coordination between county teams. Please use this information with your LCFPTs to gain additional ideas and build upon recommendations to prevent future child deaths.