

# Child Death, Near Death, and Stillbirth Commission (CDNDSC)

## Policy and Procedure Regular Reviews of Child Deaths

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### **Purpose:**

The primary purpose of reviewing deaths of children is to provide recommendations to alleviate practices or conditions which impact the mortality of children, in order to safeguard the health and safety of children. The panel review is a multi-disciplinary, retrospective system review examining the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of the child for any applicable recommendations for systems change in order to prevent future deaths of children in the State of Delaware.

### **Policy:**

In cases of a child death not caused by abuse and/or neglect, a regular review will be conducted.

### **Legislative Authority:**

31 Del. C. § 320

### **Procedure:**

1. Prior to the panel reviews, the staff will provide the panel members the names of the deceased children (and the names of the parents, if available) through dissemination of CDNDSC datasheets (See attachment 1).
2. Datasheets (to include a narrative section) will be requested by CDNDSC staff from the public agency panel members. These datasheets will be given to the entire panel prior to the reviews.
3. CDNDSC Staff will subpoena medical (including psychiatric records) and school records as appropriate.
4. A medical professional will review and summarize medical records pertinent to the case and present an overview to the panel.
5. A NASW representative or mental health professional on the panel to review and summarize any mental health records and present an overview to the panel.
6. At each panel meeting, panel members and invited professionals must comply with and sign the confidentiality statement for the review process. Confidentiality sheets are collected and maintained by CDNDSC staff.

- Specific identifying case information will remain confidential and restricted to panel and Commission members.
7. When more than one representative of an agency is present, such as an alternate or a Commissioner, one person must be designated to present the information and identified as the voting member. Voting members have a priority seat at the table.
  8. Professionals directly involved in a case are invited by the panel chair to participate in the review of that case when it is believed that relevant information could be obtained.
  9. Panel members will orally summarize their agencies' interaction with the child and/or family when applicable.
  10. Following presentations of information and discussion, the process to be followed by the panel chair is as follows:
    - a. The chair asks the panel if they are ready to vote. If "no", chair continues to lead discussion or review is deferred.
    - b. If "yes", the chair will ask:
      - What factors, if any, contributed to the death?
      - Were reasonable standards of practice met by the systems involved?
      - Do we see an opportunity for system improvement?
    - c. The panel will vote to make a determination of preventable, not preventable, or undecided. Once a vote is taken, there will be no additional discussion or questions.
    - d. Exceptions to voting will be cases of SIDS and SUID. In these circumstances, the panel will identify and document any risk factors (as identified by the American Academy of Pediatrics) present in the case. These risk factors will be tracked by CDNDSC staff.
    - e. Recommendations shall be clearly written with enough information so that others not involved in the review will understand the intent and logically relate to the incident. Recommendations must be measurable and address changes to specific systems.
    - f. An affirmative vote of sixty percent of those present is needed to adopt any recommendations.
  11. If a review cannot be completed due to lack of information, the following should be considered:
    - a. Request that additional information be subpoenaed.
    - b. Panel members research additional case information within their own agency.
    - c. Invite the professional (s) who can be of assistance in completing the review.
    - d. Defer the review.
  12. A case may be deferred in the following instances:
    - a. By the direction of the Office of the Attorney General due to criminal prosecution. No information will be distributed by CDNDSC staff to panel members on these cases until released by the Office of the Attorney General.

- b. Request is made by the panel for more information. CDNDSC staff will attempt to obtain the information, distribute it to panel members and reschedule the deferred case as quickly as possible.
13. The chair or co-chair completes the review documentation sheet summarizing agency activity, the panel vote, and recommendations. (See attachment 2)
14. CDNDSC staff will prepare the panel report of the chair to submit at the next scheduled Commission meeting. (See attachment 3)
15. The panel chair, in collaboration with staff, will ensure the recommendations are reported to the Commission. Recommendations must be approved by the Commission prior to documenting in the CDNDSC database.
16. Recommendations are reported to the Governor, General Assembly, Child Protection Accountability Commission, and through the CDNDSC annual report, which is available to members of the general public upon request. The Annual report will also be posted on the CDNDSC website (once initiated).
17. The panel will be asked to develop action steps for each recommendation made and approved by the Commission. Action steps must be approved by the Commission prior to documenting in the CDNDSC database.
18. Progress on the action steps will be reviewed with panels during meetings. Action steps will be documented in the CDNDSC annual report.
19. At the completion of a regular review, all panel members will turn over all documentation related to that review to CDNDSC staff for shredding of this confidential information.
20. All data sheets, findings forms, and other related review materials (e.g., confidentiality forms) will be stored in a locked file maintained by the CDNDSC staff.
21. All data will be entered into a secured computerized database, which will be maintained by the CDNDSC staff.

# Attachment 1

## **Child Death, Near Death, and Stillbirth Commission (CDNDSC)**

Death Review Cover Sheet

County: \_\_\_\_\_ ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Panel Reviewing Case: \_\_\_\_\_

### **DECEDENT'S INFORMATION:**

Child's Name:

Child's Residence:

DOB:                      Gender:                      Race:                      Ethnicity:

Date of Death:                      Age at Time of Death:

Certification Date:

Manner of Death:

Cause of Death 1

Cause of Death 2

Cause of Death 3

### **BRIEF CASE SCENARIO:**

### **FAMILY INFORMATION:**

Mother's Name:

DOB:

Address:

List Any Alias Used, Including Maiden Name:

Father's Name:

DOB:

Address:

List Any Alias Used:

### **KNOWN AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

### **OTHER:**



**Issues of concern to be tracked:**

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# Attachment 3

<b>CHILD DEATH, NEAR DEATH AND STILLBIRTH COMMISSION</b> _____ Panel <b>Panel Report to the Commission</b>
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**Date of Report:**

**Panel Chair:**

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**Period Covered:**

**Number of Panel Meetings:**

**Number of Cases Reviewed:**

**Number of Expedited Reviews:**

<b>Case #</b>	<b>Cause of Death/ Near Death</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>