

ONONDAGA COUNTY  
*Child Fatality  
Review Team*



*Together, Keeping Kids Safe*

**Annual Report  
2007**

# **Onondaga County Child Fatality Review Team Annual Report 2007**

In 2007 the Child Fatality Review Team reviewed 53 cases of child deaths between 0-18 years of age. Of these cases, 17 were infants, 5 were between the ages of 1-4 years, 3 between 5-9 years of age, 8 between 10-14 years of age and 20 between 15-18 years of age. The manners of death include accidental, natural, homicide, suicide, undetermined and therapeutic complications. The majority of these cases were from Onondaga County but other counties included Cayuga, Jefferson, Madison, Oswego, Tompkins and St. Lawrence. These cases may have been referred to the Medical Examiner's office or the child/adolescent may have been transported to Onondaga County for medical care and subsequently died in Onondaga County.

## **Manner and Cause of Child/Adolescent Deaths in Onondaga County**

### **Natural Causes**

A total of 11 children/adolescents between the ages of 0-18 years died of natural causes in Onondaga County. This is 21% of the total cases reviewed by the CFRT. Of these deaths, 2 were caused by complications of seizure disorder, 1 from complications of Dandy Walker syndrome and other causes included congenital heart disease, sudden cardiac death, SIDS, tracheobronchitis, intracardiac vascular malformation, interstitial pneumonia (d/t Influenza A virus), acute viral febrile illness, idiopathic myocardial fibrosis and lymphocytic thyroiditis and massive hydrocephalus d/t 4<sup>th</sup> ventricular obstruction.

Five of the natural deaths were under the age of 1 year, one 1-4 years, one 5-9 years, two 10-14 years and two 15-18 years. Five were males and 6 were females. Nine were Caucasian, 1 African-American, and 1 Asian. Eight were from Onondaga County, 1 from Oswego County, 1 from Madison County and 1 from Jefferson County.

### **Accidental Deaths**

Accidental deaths were the most frequent cause of child fatalities reviewed by the CFRT. A total of 27 children/adolescents between the ages of 0-18 years died of accidental causes in Onondaga County. This is 51% of the total cases reviewed. Of these deaths 8 were caused by motor vehicle accidents (1 with acute alcohol intoxication), 5 positional

asphyxia (unsafe sleeping environment), 1 overlaying, 2 SUV accidents, 2 house fire, 4 asphyxia (included 4 drowning and 1 with inhalant abuse), penetrating injury to neck, fractured skull (fall), 1 multiple drug intoxication, complications of quadriplegia, and 1 snowmobile accident.

Seven of the accidental deaths were under the age of 1 year, one 1-4 years, two 5-9 years, five 10-14 years and twelve 15-18 years. All 27 deaths were of Caucasian ethnicity. Sixteen were from Onondaga County, 2 from Jefferson County, 2 from Oswego County, 1 from Tompkins County, 2 from St. Lawrence County, 3 from Madison County and 1 from Cayuga County.

### **Homicide Deaths**

A total of 6 homicide deaths were reviewed by the CFRT. This is 11% of all the cases reviewed in 2007. Of these homicides, 2 were due to blunt head trauma, 2 due to gunshot wounds, 1 due to stab wound and 1 due to blunt force causing cranio-cerebral injuries.

One homicide death was under the age of 1 year, two 1-4 years and three 15-18 years. Three of the homicides were of Caucasian ethnicity and 3 African-American. Five were from Onondaga County and 1 from Cayuga County.

### **Suicide Deaths**

A total of 2 suicide deaths were reviewed by CFRT. This is 4% of all the cases reviewed in 2007. Of these suicides, 1 was by asphyxia and 1 by a gunshot wound to the head.

Both suicides were males between the ages of 15-18 years of age. Both were Caucasian and 1 was from Jefferson County and 1 from Oswego County.

### **Undetermined Deaths**

A total of 6 undetermined deaths were reviewed by the CFRT in 2007. This is 11% of all the cases reviewed. Of these, 2 were sudden unexpected deaths (co-sleeping on couch), 1 sudden unexplained death (in crib), 1 combined effects of blunt head trauma and asphyxia, 1 asphyxia due to strangulation, and 1 remains undetermined (suspicious in nature).

Four of these deaths were in infants under the age of 1 year. Four were Caucasian and 2 were African-American. Four were from Onondaga County, 1 from Cayuga County, and 1 from Oswego County.

### **Deaths from Therapeutic Complications**

One death from therapeutic complications was reviewed by the CFRT. This was 2% of all the cases reviewed in 2007. The death was

from complications of Dandy Walker Syndrome and involved a female 10-14 years of age, Caucasian and living in Onondaga County.

### **Infant deaths**

A total of 17 infants under the age of one year were reviewed by the CFRT in Onondaga County in 2007. This is 32% of the total cases reviewed by the CFRT. Six of these infants were male and 11 were female. Two of these infant deaths were sudden unexpected (co-sleeping on the couch), 1 sudden unexplained (in crib), 5 from positional asphyxia (unsafe sleeping environment), and 1 from overlaying. This is 52% of the infant deaths. The other causes of infant deaths included complications of blunt head trauma (homicide), tracheobronchitis and interstitial pneumonitis (influenza A virus, prematurity), acute viral febrile illness, SIDS, congenital heart disease, intracardiac vascular malformation, patchy bronchopneumonia with pulmonary edema (aspiration, drowning), and undetermined (suspicious in nature). These causes account for 48% of the infant deaths.

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