

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2021 SPECIAL SESSION I

CHAPTER 164

An Act to require the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to convene a work group to develop a plan for the establishment of a Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Team; report.

[H 1950]

Approved March 18, 2021

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *That the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of the Department of Health shall convene a work group to develop a plan for establishing a Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Team (the Team) to (i) examine medical, social, and other related information regarding fetal and infant deaths in the Commonwealth to facilitate broad quantitative analyses as well as in-depth qualitative reviews of fetal and infant deaths in the Commonwealth to identify and investigate correlating factors that influence fetal and infant mortality; (ii) develop policy and programmatic recommendations to address the circumstances that may negatively impact fetal and infant health and improve services, systems of care, and resources for women, infants, and families; and (iii) work with communities and partners to implement such policy and programmatic recommendations and create actionable processes of change. Such plan may include:*

1. Methods for collecting information about fetal and infant deaths in the Commonwealth, including the collection of information about fetal deaths occurring after 20 weeks' gestation and deaths of children under the age of 12 months as feasible, for broad statistical analysis;

2. Criteria for the selection of deaths for investigation and review;

3. Criteria for the selection of deaths for which additional voluntary investigation and qualitative review beyond that to which every death selected for review is subject. Such additional investigation and qualitative review may include interviews with biological or adoptive parents, stepparents, or legal guardians of the fetus or infant, members of the family of the fetus or infant, and other persons with information about the fetus or infant; reviews of circumstances and factors surrounding the fetal or infant death; and other investigative research;

4. Procedures necessary for maintaining necessary confidentiality and security with regard to reviews undertaken by the Team;

5. A five-year plan for initiation and operation of the Team, which may include (i) identification of necessary staff and equipment, (ii) identification of annual goals for the Team, (iii) provisions for coordination among stakeholders, (iv) identification of sources of funding available to support and sustain the Team, and (v) a proposed annual budget for each year; and

6. Any recommendations for further study, legislative actions, or implementation of the Team.

The work group shall be composed of the Chief Medical Examiner, the Director of the Office of Family Health, the State Registrar of Vital Records, the Commissioner of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, and the Director of the Department of Criminal Justice Services or their designees, and (a) the Presidents of the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association, the Virginia Chapter of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the Virginia Chapter of the American Association of Pediatrics, and the Virginia Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives, or their designees; (b) the Director of the Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative or his designee; (c) representatives of community stakeholders such as doulas, local nonprofit organizations, mental health treatment providers, and other community stakeholders; (d) representatives of medical professionals with experience in fetal, infant, or maternal health; and (e) staff and members of such state agencies as may be appropriate.

The work group shall report its findings and provide the plan to the Chairmen of the House Committees on Appropriations and Health, Welfare and Institutions and the Senate Committees on Finance and Appropriations and Education and Health by December 1, 2021.