



Office of Suffolk County  
District Attorney  
Daniel F. Conley

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## Fast Facts

This newsletter examines two issues: the risks associated with co-sleeping and the dangers of maternal drug use. It is the goal of the Suffolk County CFRT to share information regarding preventable child deaths. We hope that by increasing awareness of child deaths, we can work together to prevent child fatalities in Massachusetts. Please share this information with others.

### Knowledge is Power!

Learn about why kids die and what we can do to prevent it.

### Case Example 1

**Cause of Death:** Sudden Infant Death while Co-Sleeping with Adult

**Age at Death:** >1 year

The child fatality review revealed the following:

- Infant was born premature and was hospitalized for 3 months prior to discharge home;
- Infant was acutely ill one week prior to death;
- Adult brought child into bed because child was sick and not sleeping well;
- Adult, toddler, and infant were sleeping in a twin bed;
- Adult reported that infant was "fine" in the early A.M. hours;
- Adult woke in the late morning with infant unresponsive in bed; and
- Family had moved only three days before infant's death.

This case presented several risk factors which are associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The infant was born premature and had been exposed to cigarette smoke during the mother's pregnancy (a factor which triples a baby's risk of dying from SIDS). In 2007, the MA Center for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome received 101 case referrals. Of these referrals, 35% of the deaths were linked to unsafe sleep position or environment - such as sleeping with an adult or on a couch. The Suffolk CFRT encourages providers to take every opportunity to remind those who care for infants about safe sleep practices. (Information provided by MA Center for SIDS and kidshealth.org.)

[Massachusetts Center for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome](#)

Each year more than 4,500 infants die suddenly of no obvious cause

[Reduce the Risk](#)

Always place babies on their backs to sleep

[Safe Sleep Environment](#)

Remember: Adult beds are not designed with infant safety in mind

[Learn More](#)

**Substance Abuse Treatment Programs in Massachusetts**

[Search Here](#)

Ongoing drug use increases the risk of miscarriage or preterm delivery

[For More Information](#)

[Facts for Parents](#)

There is no "safe" amount of cocaine a woman can use during pregnancy

[Child Injury Prevention Program](#)

A program of the Boston Public Health Commission: to increase awareness that injuries are preventable!

[Learn More](#)

Case Example 2

**Cause of Death:** Extreme Prematurity, Maternal Acute & Chronic Substance Abuse (Cocaine)

**Age at Death:** >1 day

The child fatality review revealed the following:

- Infant was born premature due to placental abruption;
- Toxicology screen was positive for cocaine and methadone;
- Mother had used drugs since her early teen years;
- Mother had been a victim of domestic violence;
- Mother had a severe mental health disorder;
- Mother had lost custody of several other children;
- Mother had less than a grade school education; and
- Mother was at risk for homelessness.

The Suffolk County CFRT began receiving reports of premature births due to maternal substance abuse in 2007. To date, a total of seven cases have been reviewed. These cases present many similarities including: age of mother, previous pregnancies, history of domestic violence, risk of homelessness, mental health disorders, late prenatal care (if any), tobacco use, lack of support, and others. The cases also demonstrate health care disparities and a lack of complex treatment options for these women. The Suffolk CFRT acknowledges that these findings are based on a small number of case reviews and the facts may not reflect the majority. The Suffolk Child Fatality Review Team will collaborate with the Boston Public Health Commission to create additional dialogue related to this subject.

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National News

**Apple removes game "Baby Shaker" from iPhone Applications**

[Read More](#)

**Fisher-Price Recalls 3-in-1 High Chairs due to Fall Hazard**

[CPSC recall report](#)

**Saving Babies: Exposing Infant Death in America** [Click Here](#)

**How Multiple Childhood Maltreatments Lead to Greater Adolescent Binge Drinking**

[Read Article](#)

**A Dangerous Gap in Pool Safety** [The Wall Street Journal](#)

**Child Death Review pioneer Gus Kolilis retires** [Full Article](#)

**Child Passenger Safety: Keeping Kids Safe** [More Here](#)

**Local Non-Profit Organization: Fathers Forever** [Link](#)

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**Massachusetts  
Injury Prevention &  
Control Program**  
[Connect](#)

## Child Fatality Review Team Contact

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## Child Abuse Prevention

[MA Department of  
Children & Families](#)

[National Child Abuse  
Prevention](#)

**"Getting the Most  
from Your Hard  
Work on Child  
Death Review  
Reporting"** [Webcast](#)

**Reviewing the past, Improving the  
Future.**

The intended use of this newsletter is to promote education related to child fatalities. Please send this information to others. Child Fatality Review Teams work to understand the causes and decrease the number of preventable child deaths. Teams look at the past with the hope of improving the future. To view archived newsletters please visit [www.suffolkcac.org](http://www.suffolkcac.org), programs and services -- [Child Fatality Review Team](#). We cannot guarantee that all links will connect, nor endorse the content of the links. Please email your feedback, suggestions or news updates to: [megan.pulvermacher@state.ma.us](mailto:megan.pulvermacher@state.ma.us)