

STARK COUNTY CHILD FATALITY REVIEW & FETAL INFANT MORTALITY REVIEW

2024 Annual Report





*"Striving Toward a **Healthier** Community."*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose and Objectives _____	Pg 3
Meeting Schedule and Structure _____	Pg 4
Required Committee Members and Additional Partner Agencies _____	Pg 4-5
Review Process and Data Sources _____	Pg 5

Data Findings

Table 1 County Metrics _____	Pg 6
Figure 1 Gender Metrics _____	Pg 6
Figure 2 Manner Metrics _____	Pg 6
Graph 3 Race Metrics _____	Pg 6
Map 1 _____	Pg 7

Recommendations _____	Pg 8-9
------------------------------	---------------

Implementation _____	Pg 9
-----------------------------	-------------

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the Child Fatality Review (CFR) and Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) process is to reduce the incidence of preventable infant and child deaths. In Stark County this is done through a detailed comprehensive local review of the circumstances surrounding the deaths to all infants and children in our community. These reviews are completed by a multidisciplinary team made up of representatives from the local agencies listed on page 4 and 5. It's our hope that through this process of reviews and recommendations we can raise community awareness about the circumstances surrounding preventable child deaths and ultimately eliminate or decrease these deaths from continuing to occur. The CFR team was chaired by the Stark County Health Department and reviewed the deaths of children under 18 years of age. The FIMR team was chaired by Canton City Public Health and reviewed deaths that occurred between 20 weeks gestation through the age of one.

After a review of the infant and child deaths that occurred to Stark County children during 2024, the Stark County Child Fatality Review Board and the Stark County Fetal Infant Mortality Review Team would like to provide the community with their 2024 Recommendations for the prevention of future deaths.

The Stark County Child Fatality Review Board and the Stark County Fetal Infant Mortality Review Team completed reviews of 58 deaths. There were 17 cases reviewed by CFR and 41 cases reviewed by FIMR. The deaths that were reviewed occurred between 2022 through 2024. CFR has one case from 2021, one case from 2022, one case from 2023 and six cases from 2024 that are pending and will be reviewed in the future. FIMR has six cases from 2023 and thirty-five cases from 2024 that are pending and will be reviewed in the future.



MEETING FREQUENCY AND STRUCTURE

Frequency of Meetings

Child Fatality Review meetings are held on an annual basis or more often if necessary to review data and individual cases. Two meetings were held in 2024. Fetal Infant Mortality Review meetings are held on a monthly basis.

Structure

The county commissioners appointed the Stark County Health Commissioner to establish the CFR committee. ORC 307.622 states, "The review committee shall consist of the following:

- 1.A county coroner or designee;
- 2.The chief of police of a police department or the sheriff that serves the greatest population in the county or region or a designee of the chief or sheriff;
- 3.The executive director of a public children services agency or designee;
- 4.A public health official or designee;
- 5.The executive director of a board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services or designee;
- 6.A physician who holds a license issued pursuant to Chapter 4731. of the Revised Code authorizing the practice of medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine and surgery, specializes in pediatric or family medicine, and currently practices pediatric or family medicine.

REQUIRED CFR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kirkland Norris, R.E.H.S, M.P.H
Health Commissioner

Ronald Rusnak, M.D.
Stark County Coroner

Sondra Troyer
Stark County Sheriff's Office

Tricia Mayle
Stark County Job and Family Services

Amanda Uhler RN, MPH
Public Health Official

John Aller, LICDC-CS, LPCC-S
Executive Director of Stark County Mental
Health and Addition Recovery

Dr. Maureen Ahmann, D.O.
Physician



ADDITIONAL PARTNER AGENCIES THAT ARE INVITED

Canton City Public Health

Canton City Police Department

Stark County Educational Service Center

Alliance for Children and Families

Plain Township Fire and Rescue

FETAL INFANT MORTALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Canton City Public Health- Maggie Bradford, Monica Coventry, Danielle Grimm, Dawn Miller, Diane Thompson

Stark County Health Department- Stephanie Hann, Aubrey Neuenschwander, Amanda Uhler

Akron Children's Maternal Fetal Medicine at Aultman- Dr Michael Krew

Cleveland Clinic Mercy Hospital- Charlotte Forsythe

Community Health Care, Pediatrics- Dr Erin Weber

Aultman Hospital- Christine Powell

Stark County Coroner's Office- Kayla Horner

My Community Health Care- Talisa Ellis, Ashley Hutchinson

REVIEW PROCESS AND DATA SOURCES

The review boards are focused on all childhood decedents who resided in Stark County. For each death, the boards collect demographics including age, sex, race, ethnicity, the year the death occurred, the location of the death, the cause of death, factors that contributed, medical records and any other pertinent information.

The cases reviewed in this report were deaths that occurred from 2020 through 2024. Each case review is discussed among the team to gather a comprehensive understanding of the context of the decedent's life and the events and actions that led to the fatality. The discussions highlight potential contributing factors, intervention implications and recommendations for systemic improvements.

Data sources include: DataOhio Portal Protected Mortality Download, behavioral health records, medical records, newborn screening records, community resource records, immunization records, criminal justice records, death certificates, forensic records, prescription drug records, social service records, and military/veterans' affairs records.

DATA FINDINGS

Table 1: County Metrics

	Total Number of Deaths
Under Age 1	23
Age 1-17	15
Total	38*

*Per Ohio Vital Statistics, this number does not include fetal deaths

Figure 1: Deaths by Gender

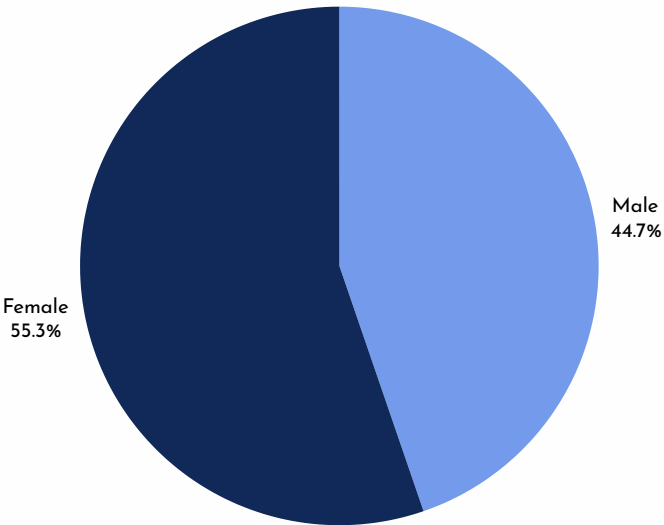


Figure 2: Deaths by Manner

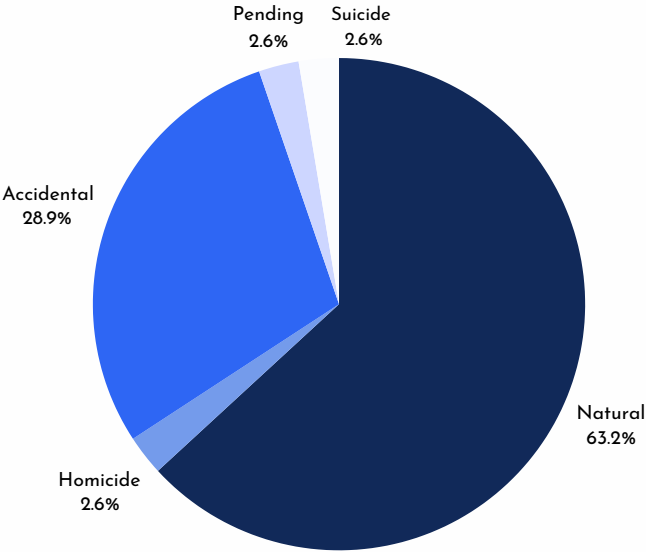
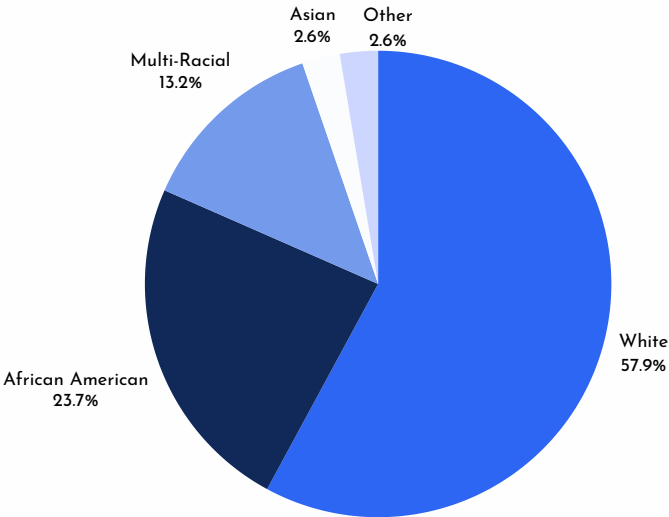
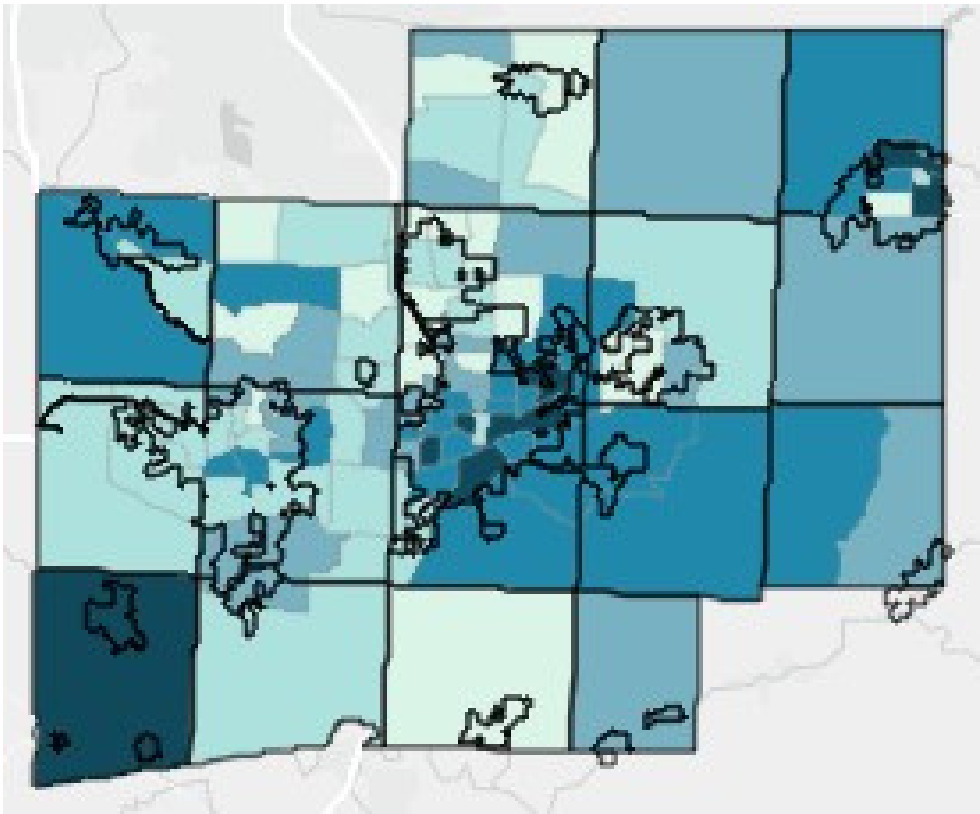


Figure 3: Deaths by Race



CHILDHOOD DEATHS BY CENSUS TRACT

The map below shows where children who have passed away resided. The lighter colors depict fewer deaths, and the darker colors represent a higher incidence of deaths. The map used data from 2000-2024.



For an interactive view, please visit our dashboard using the QR code below.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF NATURAL AND ACCIDENTAL DEATHS

- Increased outreach in Complex Medical Help (CMH) program for continued coverage.
- Implement community navigator in hospital systems to assist with applications for assistance programs. (Recommended 2 times).
- Increased connections between public health and hospital-based social workers to increase awareness and education of community programs.
- Early referral to occupational, speech and physical therapy.
- Implement community-based respite care/ volunteer services for respite care.
- Provide resources on caregiver fatigue through CMH program.
- Recommend genetic testing for siblings of children with chronic diseases/conditions.
- Provide infant/child CPR education to community members.
- Encourage messaging regarding dangers of allowing children to eat in the car.
- Provide education on signs and symptoms of choking.
- Provide car seat safety education.
- Provide swimming pool safety education, including removing pool access to children by locked fencing surrounding the pool and locking house doors to limit pool access.
- Recommend home safety assessments for families whose children have autism.
- Recommend and advocate that private insurances cover respite care.
- Normalize that babies cry.
- Promote messaging of room sharing, not co-sleeping.
- Provide safe sleep education to extended family members.
- Advocate for funding for child protective services to complete home visits and increased follow up visits for at risk families.
- Model safe sleep practices at birthing locations.
- Provide education to families on when to transition children from a crib to a bed/mattress.
- Educate families on when to seek further medical care for sick children, and when to call 911 versus transporting in a personal vehicle.
- Create local grief groups.
- Research frequency of pediatric cancer within the county.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF HOMICIDE AND SUICIDE DEATHS

- Safe gun storage.
- Provide education to young children on gun safety.
- Provide parent education on tools to manage electronic media at age specific intervals.
- Require gun ownership education and safety tips.

STARK COUNTY FETAL INFANT MORTALITY REVIEW

2024 Recommendations



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF INFANT DEATHS

- Utilize providers for monitoring and counseling of medical conditions such as diabetes management, hypertension, smoking/vaping and other conditions impacting birth outcomes and maternal health.
- Education on recommended birth spacing.
- Education on fetal movement monitoring. Promote Count the Kicks app for tracking.
- Promote enrollment and regular participation in community programs such as Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Help Me Grow, Cribs for Kids and Community Health Worker programs.
- Deliver pregnancy support and education in primary language utilizing interpreter services. Promote in person interpreters when available.
- Create a community guide for pregnant persons that includes resources on genetic testing, mental and behavioral health locations and stress management resources.
- Provision of education and community-based messaging about the importance of ensuring a safe sleep environment for anyone caring for an infant (include day care providers, grandparents and additional family and friends) when promoting messaging regarding safe sleep and where to obtain cribs.

CFR AND FIMR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stark County Health Department partnered with safe sleep work group to discuss recommendations and statistics at quarterly meetings.
- Stark County Health Department held a provider education session held September 12, 2024, in partnership with Aultman Hospital.
- Infant CPR kits and education available in various community agencies including Stark County Health Department and Canton City Public Health provided by Stark Community Foundation and Stark NAACP.
- Stark County Health Department promoted CMH program to Stark County school nurses May 1, 2024.
- Stark County Health Department promoted CMH program to Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities on October 10, 2024.
- Canton City Public Health and the THRIVE Collaborative hosted the viewing of the short film TOXIC: A Black Woman's Story and panel discussion held on October 22, 2024.
- Stark County Health Department met with Summit County Public Health to gain insight on cancer monitoring and reporting.
- Stark County Health Department and Canton City Public Health held a Drive Thru Baby Shower with 10 community partners in August 2024.





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