



2023-2024 General Assembly

# HOUSE BILL 259: 2023 Appropriations Act, Sec. 9H.15(a)-(d): Establishment and Funding of the State Office of Child Fatality Prevention within the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health

<b>Committee:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	November 20, 2023
<b>Introduced by:</b>		<b>Prepared by:</b>	Theresa Matula
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Sec. 9H.15(a)-(d) of S.L. 2023-134		Legislative Analyst

**OVERVIEW:** Section 9H.15(a)-(d) of S.L. 2023-134 creates the State Office of Child Fatality Prevention by creating several new statutes (Part 4C in Article 3 of Chapter 143B). There is a new definition section (G.S. 143B-150.25) that defines the Child Fatality Prevention System as being comprised of: Local Teams, the NC Child Fatality Task Force (G.S. 7B-142), the State Office of Child Fatality Prevention, and staff within the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner whose primary responsibilities involve death investigations into child fatalities. The State Office of Child Fatality Prevention is established within the Division of Public Health (DPH), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and will serve as the lead agency for child fatality prevention and coordinate State level support functions in a manner that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness and expands system capacity (G.S. 143B-150.26).

**Powers and Duties** - The powers and duties (G.S. 143B-150.27) of the State Office are as follows:

- Coordinate the work of the statewide Child Fatality Prevention System.
- Implement and manage a centralized data and information system capable of gathering, analyzing, and reporting aggregate information from child death review teams with appropriate protocols for sharing information and protecting confidentiality.
- Create and implement tools, guidelines, resources, and training, and provide technical assistance for Local Teams to enable the teams to do the following:
  - Conduct effective reviews tailored to the type of death being reviewed.
  - Make effective recommendations about child fatality prevention.
  - Gather, analyze, and appropriately report on case data and findings while protecting confidentiality.
  - Facilitate the implementation of prevention strategies in their communities.
- Work with medical examiner child fatality staff and the State Center for Health Statistics to provide Local Teams initial information about child deaths in their respective counties.
- Perform research, consult with stakeholders and experts, and collaborate with others to understand the causes of child deaths and strategies, programs, and policies to prevent

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- child deaths, abuse, and neglect in order to inform the work of the Child Fatality Prevention System or as requested by the Child Fatality Task Force.*
- *Educate State and local leaders, including the General Assembly, and others about the Child Fatality Prevention System and issues and prevention strategies addressed by the system.*
  - *Collaborate with State and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, academia, advocacy organizations, and others to facilitate the implementation of evidence driven initiatives to prevent child abuse, neglect, and death, such as education and awareness initiatives.*
  - *Create and implement processes for evaluating the ability of the Child Fatality Prevention System to achieve outcomes and to report to the Child Fatality Task Force.*
  - *Consider opportunities to seek and administer grant and other non-State funding sources to support State or local efforts.*
  - *Develop guidance, including a model agreement to be used by counties, to inform local decisions about the formation and implementation of single versus multicounty Local Teams.*

**Funding** - *Of the funds appropriated by the act to DPH, the recurring sum of \$569,885, and the nonrecurring sum \$18,115 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year; and the recurring sum of \$758,885 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year must be allocated and used as follows:*

- *\$554,885 in recurring funds for each year of the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium for operational costs to establish the State Office. DHHS may use up to \$514,735 of these recurring funds for each year of the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium to establish up to five full time positions within the State Office.*
- *\$18,115 in nonrecurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year for nonrecurring costs associated with establishing the State Office.*
- *Up to \$15,000 in recurring funds for each year of the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium to support the work of the Child Fatality Task Force and to pay its members, staff, and consultants in accordance with statutes (G.S. 7B-1414), as amended by this act.*

*DHHS is prohibited from using the funds listed above for any purpose other than those specified.*

*\$189,000 in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year must be distributed among the State's 100 counties, as determined by DHHS, to support implementation of the changes authorized by this act to restructure child death reviews by Local Teams and to offset the costs associated with Local Team participation in the National Fatality Review Case Reporting System. Counties are prohibited from using these funds for any purpose other than specified.*

*This portion of this section that makes statutory changes creating the State Office of Child Fatality Prevention became effective October 3, 2023, the funding portions became effective July 1, 2023.*