

Conducting Effective FIMR Meetings

To move from discussion to action, FIMR meetings require competent leadership. A strong leader will focus on addressing the group's psychosocial needs and will facilitate the development of satisfying interpersonal relationships in the context of the review meeting. In addition, each team member needs to be committed to keeping meetings productive and successful. Some teams accomplish this by having members sign a "charter" in the beginning, laying down some simple ground rule that leaders and members agree to follow. These ground rule help build and sustain trusting relationships, address issues of participation and inclusion, clarifies common expectations, and addresses how team will resolve conflict.

Effective meeting facilitation also ensures that each team member has the opportunity to speak and is listened to respectfully. A well-functioning FIMR CRT will find that they spend a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting to do introductions, remind members about confidentiality, and do some simple "team maintenance". A practice that many FIMR teams across the country have adopted is to start all review meetings with a moment of silence. A simple script might be: *Please join us in a moment of silence to recognize why we are here and to honor the lives lost and families impacted by fetal and infant death in our community. We thank you all for volunteering your time to help identify how we can prevent future deaths from occurring.*

Most teams find that it is helpful to present cases in a structured way. There are several methods that work, teams will find the style that suits the needs of the participants. One suggestion is to distribute the de-identified case summaries at the start of the meeting, have team members do a silent read through of the case, and then ask a facilitator to bring out any highlights of the case and generate discussion. Teams use a variety of tools to encourage broad team deliberations. Another strategy might be to securely send case summaries to team members ahead of the meeting so that they can be somewhat familiar with the cases to be discussed. This aids in high volume reviews.

About 70 – 75% of the meeting focuses on the "task at hand", reviewing cases, discussing the findings, and making recommendations. At the conclusion of the meeting, we recommend taking some time for self-care, and check in with members on their feeling. Close examination of fetal, infant and child deaths can be taxing mentally and emotionally.



Template for a FIMR “Team Charter”

The Carroll County Fetal and Infant Mortality Review team includes dynamic community leaders such as public and private non-profit agency heads, business owners, public health professionals, health care providers, community members and others interested in and able to take the lead to actively implement community specific, culturally competent actions that will lead to healthier mothers and babies.

As the sponsor agency, the Carroll County Health Department will be responsible for:

- The Carroll County Health Department will apply for and administer a grant from the Center for Maternal and Child Health of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The Health Department will maintain minimal staff to operate the FIMR program, including the FIMR Coordinator/abstractor, a maternal interviewer, and a Community Action Team meeting facilitator.
- Meetings will start and end on time and will be held quarterly on the first Friday of the month unless otherwise designated by the FIMR coordinator.
- All meetings will be held at the Carroll County Health Department, 290 South Center Street, Westminster, MD 21157 from 12:00 to 2:00 with a light lunch provided.
- Meetings will be facilitated to ensure that all members are listened to respectfully, every member has the opportunity to speak, and one person speaks at a time
- Nominal group process will be used to resolve difficult and to make difficult decisions
- The Carroll County Health Department will generate an annual FIMR report that will be disseminated to community and state level leaders

As a voluntary member of the Carroll County FIMR Case Review Team (or Community Action Team) I will be responsible for:

- All FIMR team members will strive to serve in a capacity which meets the Mission of the FIMR program, with strict attention to professionalism and respect in working with other team members and community groups to implement change.
- All FIMR team members will agree to serve a 2-year term with the option of extension of that term of office.
- Each team member must pledge to work actively to implement annual changes in service systems and resources for women, infants and families.
- As an effective team member, I will
 - Listen respectfully
 - Be tough on ideas, not team members (no personal attacks)
 - Not tolerate the use of stereotypes or prejudicial comments
- Refrain from discussing or sharing information about the case, the case summary and the proceedings of the CRT outside of the CRT meeting

Signature: _____

Date: _____