

Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)

Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) is a strictly defined and carefully organized process of reviewing fetal and infant deaths at the local level, as they occur. FIMR is nationally organized and has been operational in over 200 communities in the United States for over 20 years. Milwaukee's FIMR process was begun approximately 20 years ago.

Goals of FIMRs include to improve communities' performance of public health function as well as enhance existing perinatal care system goals, components and communication mechanisms. FIMR's focus on systems of care and identifying gaps in care requires examination of confidential information and strict confidentiality is a condition of participation. The rights of women, infants and families are recognized and respected. The FIMR process complements the ongoing analysis of vital statistic data but is, at its core, a community quality improvement process not academic research.

According to the National Fetal-Infant Mortality Review Program, the umbrella organization for all FIMR projects in the United State and a collaborative effort of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the US Department of Health and Human Services, FIMR is a public health prevention program, not a research project. The "FIMR Manuel: A Guide for Communities", 2nd Edition, August, 2008, page 23, states:

"FIMR is not a research program; rather, it functions as a continuous quality improvement process for the community...the FIMR process is not a research project and should not be subject to the institutional review board (IRB) process."

Recommendation: If the Special Legislative Committee on Infant Mortality chooses to comment on or craft legislation affecting FIMRs in Wisconsin, the guidance of the National Fetal-Infant Mortality Review Program should be taken into account.

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