
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2984

Brief Description: Requiring child fatality reviews for children involved in the child welfare system.

Sponsors: Representatives Shabro, Kagi, Bush, Darneille, Dickerson, Roach, Rodne, Bailey, Boldt, Campbell, Nixon, McDonald, Kenney, Armstrong, Woods, Chase and Hunter.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services to conduct child fatality reviews.

Hearing Date: 2/2/04

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

Local health departments are authorized by law to conduct child mortality reviews. A child mortality review consists of a process for examining factors that contribute to deaths of children under 18 years of age. The process may include the following:

- a systematic review of medical, clinical, and hospital records;
- home interviews of parents and caretakers of children who have died;
- analysis of individual case information; and
- review of this information by a team of professionals in order to identify modifiable medical, socioeconomic, public health, behavioral, administrative, educational, and environmental factors associated with the death.

Separate from the child mortality review, the Children's Administration (CA) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) conducts internal child fatality reviews when any of the following criteria are met with reference to the death of a child:

- The child's family had an open case with CA at the time of death.
- The child's family received any services from the CA within the 12 months preceding the death, including a referral for services that did not result in an open case.
- The death occurred in a home or facility licensed to care for children.

The purpose of the CA's child fatality review process is to conduct an examination of the handling of a case to determine whether or not agency policies, procedures, and practices were properly followed.

Summary of Bill:

The DSHS is required to conduct a child fatality review in the event of a death from any cause of a child:

- who is in out-of-home care at the time of the child's death; or
- who had been reunified with the child's family at the time of the child's death following a placement in out-of-home care.

Upon conclusion of the child fatality review, the DSHS is required to issue a report on the results of the review.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 2004.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.