



Testimony

of

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before

New York City Council Committees on Health and General Welfare

concerning

Intro. 751: Child Fatality Review Advisory Team

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250 Broadway
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Good afternoon, Chairperson Palma, Chairperson Arroyo and members of the General Welfare and Health Committees. My name is Nancy Clark, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Environmental Disease Prevention at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. With me today is Dr. Laura DiGrande, Chair of the New York City Child Fatality Review Advisory Team. On behalf of Commissioner Farley, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify about Intro 751.

Childhood injury deaths are tragic events that prematurely end the lives of young New Yorkers each year. While injury is the most common cause of death for children in New York City and the nation, the rate of injury deaths among children in New York City is less than half the national rate.

In 2005, Local Law 115 established a multi-discipline Child Fatality Review Advisory Team (CFRAT) to better understand unnatural deaths among children and to identify strategies for injury prevention. The CFRAT reviews aggregate data, not individual injury cases, and identifies trends and risk factors for injury-related deaths among NYC children. Over the past 5 years, the CFRAT has released annual reports describing the number and causes of child injury deaths, along with information on age, gender, race/ethnicity and borough where cases occurred. Examining these data over the past several years, we have reported that the number of injury deaths averages about 50 each year with some variation from year to year. Sixty-nine per cent of child injury deaths were caused by traffic accidents, falls, fires and other unintentional causes; about 25% were homicides and suicides; and 6% from other causes. We have also learned that the risk of injury deaths are higher in neighborhoods with high poverty rates, and higher among younger children (less than three years old), boys and black, non-Hispanic children.

Working with agency partners, pediatricians and community advocates to review and disseminate information on child injury deaths and ways to prevent them is important for advocating policies and programs on injury prevention and child protection. The Department and its partners also use the report for public education programs among parent and tenant groups, as well as for health and safety professionals.

The Department supports Intro 751 to extend the work of the Child Fatality Review Advisory Team and the issuance of annual reports on the nature and causes of child fatalities. We look forward to our continued work with the Council and the Child Fatality Review Advisory Team to prevent child injuries and to assure safe and healthy environments for children and families. I thank you again for this opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions at this time.