

**The Hong Kong Society of Child Neurology and Developmental Paediatrics  
and The Hong Kong Paediatric Foundation**

**Joint Submission to the Panel on Welfare Services of the Legislative Council  
on “Child Fatality Review” on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

We at the Hong Kong Society of Child Neurology and Developmental Paediatrics and the Hong Kong Paediatric Foundation strongly support the formation of a mechanism for Child Fatality Review in Hong Kong for:

1. Identification of significant risk factors and monitoring of trends in child deaths
2. Identification of specific barrier and system issues involved in the deaths of children
3. Identification of needed changes in legislation, policy and practices, and expanded effort in child health and safety to prevent unnecessary child deaths
4. Facilitation of communication and coordination amongst agencies especially on areas concerning child death investigations and child protection strategies.
5. Provision of access to available information to facilitate child deaths investigations
6. Increase in public awareness on issues that impinge on health and safety of children.

We firmly believe that in order for the Child Fatality Review to perfectly function, the following vital factors should be considered:

1. That this is not a “fault-finding” procedure and that the review should be directed to the event rather to particular persons. This will facilitate the function of the whole review procedure without interference by human and other factors.
2. That the review should aim to cover the cardinal domains of child health, namely medical, social and educational.
3. That the procedure should be applied to all unnatural deaths, unexplained deaths and selected cases of deaths due to medical illnesses. The current proposed procedure of screening for selected cases and that only cases which have listed services of the Social Welfare Department previously is of limited value and would miss large number of cases with consequent defect of the original goals for the Review. In short the whole review as proposed would involve only

SOCIAL aspect of the review and miss other domains such as medical and educational.

4. We believe that the Review should be independent of the Coroner's Inquest because it is meant for investigation of preventable causes and to alert professionals in handling similar cases in the future which the Coroner seldom involves.
5. The mere fact that this should be under Social Welfare Department would have fallacies of missing a significant number of preventable medical cases and also involve conflict of interest in that the Social Welfare Department is reviewing its own cases which are far from ideal from the angle of fairness and being seen to be fair.
6. We firmly believe that the Review should be under the Commissioner for the Child (Head of the Children's Commission) which is being proposed concurrently in Hong Kong by the child health professionals.

On behalf of our children in Hong Kong, we applaud the Welfare Panel of the Legislative Council, under the capable Hon. Ms Chan Yuen Han and Hon. Mr. Cheung Chiu Hung, in initiating this innovative step towards establishment of the Child Fatality Review in Hong Kong and our organizations are ready to provide our professional support and input if needed.

Thank you.



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AND

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14<sup>th</sup> May 2007