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N E W S

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MANY CHILD DEATHS PREVENTABLE, REPORT STATES

COLUMBUS – Increased parental vigilance would help prevent many childhood deaths, according to the 2005 Child Fatality Review (CFR) report released today by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio Children’s Trust Fund. Many parents know that simple things such as using seat belts or child restraints properly, having working smoke alarms and providing a safe sleep environment for infants saves lives. However, parents need to practice these behaviors, according to the report.

“This report further supports what is already known about preventing child deaths,” said ODH Director J. Nick Baird, M.D. “We need to acknowledge our actions as adults often result in risks for our children.”

The mission of the CFR is to reduce the incidence of preventable child deaths in Ohio. There were 1,863 child deaths in 2003, the report says, based on preliminary data from Ohio’s vital records. Of those deaths, 1,483 were analyzed. Of the deaths reviewed, 72 percent were due to natural manners, 63 percent were infants less than 1 year of age and 59 percent were boys. The report includes reviews of child deaths that occurred in 2003.

Vehicular deaths accounted for 9 percent of all deaths reviewed, making them the leading cause of preventable deaths. Fifty-three percent of these children were 15- to 17-year-olds. Of the deaths that occurred in cars or trucks, appropriate restraints were not used by 39 percent.

This year’s CFR Annual Report presents two new special-focus sections on suicide deaths and child abuse and neglect deaths. These special sections offer in-depth information about two groups of preventable deaths for Ohio children. Expanded information is also presented for last year’s special-focus sections, vehicular deaths and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or other sleep-related deaths.

“We are especially pleased the committee chose to focus on child abuse and neglect deaths this year, because we know nothing could be more important than protecting the lives of children,” said Ohio Children’s Trust Fund Executive Director Sally Pedon.

The Ohio CFR Program was established in 2000 by the Ohio General Assembly to better understand why children die. The law mandates CFR boards in each of Ohio’s counties (or regions) to review the deaths of all children younger than 18.

More information and a copy of the report can be found at:
<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/cfhs/cfr/cfreport.aspx>