

History of Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Program

(From the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Policies and Procedures [Rev 12/09])

The California FIMR Program is modeled after the National FIMR Program of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). In 1991, California was the first state to establish a state-directed FIMR Program. The MCAH/OFP Branch funded 12 projects, two of which were also demonstration sites of the National FIMR Program. California has since expanded the FIMR Program to its current level of 16 local projects.

The Black Infant Health (BIH)-FIMR Program was initiated in November 2004 through a Title V-funded FIMR expansion project to address the persistent disparity in African American fetal and infant deaths. In order to maximize use of the FIMR expansion funds, these were distributed to the eight BIH jurisdictions that accounted for the largest percentage of African American live births and infant deaths based on 2002 vital statistics data. With the completion of the three-year pilot of the Baby Abstracting System and Information NETwork database, the BIH-FIMR Program ended on June 30, 2009.

Under provisions of the California Health and Safety Code Section 100325 to 100335, the California Department of Public Health may access records to investigate sources of mortality and shall treat such studies as confidential. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 includes provisions that allow public health monitoring, investigation and intervention and permit health care providers and other covered entities to disclose medical information for public health purposes without authorization [45 CFR 164.512(b) as does the California Civil Code 56.10(c)(7)].