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## **FATALITY REPORT FINDS FEWER CHILDREN DYING IN ARIZONA**

Every time a child dies in Arizona, the death is scrutinized by a panel of experts. Pediatricians, social workers, attorneys, advocates, law enforcement and others volunteered more than 5,700 hours to investigate the 862 child deaths last year. A number which represents fewer children than died in 2009 (947) and 26 percent fewer than died in 2005 (1,148).

“This downward trend in total number of child deaths and especially the marked decrease in deaths due to prematurity and motor vehicle crashes is good news.” said Mary Rimsza, M.D., chair of the Arizona Child Fatality Review Team. “This decrease shows that we can prevent many child deaths, often by taking simple measures such as increased supervision and ‘buckling up’ our kids.”

Rimsza’s state team supports 12 regional teams who conduct the investigations. The state panel gathers data to create an annual report and make recommendations to protect children. For instance, after 10 children died in off-road accidents in 2008, the state launched a program to educate recreational riders and hunters about ATV safety. In 2010, no children died in an off-road accident.

“Losing a child is a tragedy, no matter how it happens,” said Will Humble, ADHS Director. “If public health can track why every child in Arizona dies and figure out a logical intervention to save others, we should do it. Protecting children is as fundamental as clean drinking water and vaccinations.”

The [18<sup>th</sup> Annual Child Fatality Review Report](#) (required by statute), published by the Arizona Department of Health Services on behalf of the Child Fatality Review Team includes recommendations for elected officials, policy makers, parents and the public.

One of the findings in this year’s report calls to reduce the number of pedestrian deaths. ADHS is working with counties around the state and local school districts to establish safe routes to school. Other recommendations include ways to reduce deaths tied to home safety, substance abuse, infectious disease and maltreatment\*.

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\* *The number of child maltreatment deaths presented in this report is not comparable to child maltreatment deaths reported by the Arizona Department of Economic Security for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. (18<sup>th</sup> Annual CFR, page 62)*