



COMMISSION TO ELIMINATE
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FATALITIES

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*****PRESS RELEASE *****

**Federal Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities
Holds Public Meeting on Tribal Lands in Scottsdale, AZ**

Scottsdale, Arizona - The Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (CECANF) held a public meeting on tribal lands today at the Talking Stick Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona. The focus of the meeting was for Commission members to explore key issues related to addressing and preventing child abuse and neglect fatalities in Indian Country. It included presentations and discussions on the impact of growing up in the midst of multi-generational trauma and loss within native communities, jurisdictional considerations, challenges and successful strategies, data collection, best practices and effective interventions. Speakers included tribal leaders, federal agency representatives, and practitioners.

Yesterday, Commission members took part in a site visit to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC) Family Advocacy Center. The SRPMIC Family Advocacy Center serves two tribes, the Pima and Maricopa, comprising nearly 10,000 enrolled members. It was created in 2009 in response to the tragic deaths of two tribal children who died when a caregiver failed to keep them safe on a hot summer day. The goal of the SRPMIC Family Advocacy Center is to apply a multi-disciplinary approach to investigating reports of abuse and neglect with a greater level of information sharing among agencies, regardless of the seriousness of the report. The entire tribal Child Protective Services team, members of the Salt River Police Department, and a tribal prosecutor are co-located at the SRPMIC Family Advocacy Center, which helps facilitate information exchange. In addition, members from supportive departments, including education, behavioral health, and probation, take part in the investigation if there is a known connection to the case.

According to CECANF Chairman Dr. David Sanders, “We know that American Indian children die at a rate twice that of Caucasian and Hispanic children. The efforts of the SRPMIC Family Advocacy Center to address the challenges head on offer not only hope for positive change, but also a road map for other tribal and local communities to replicate their best practices through information sharing and identifying children at risk.”

“Despite the complicated world of jurisdiction, our multi-disciplinary team (MDT) model has been successful because we apply it to all incidents, no matter how low level or severe they may be,” noted Sheri Freemont, Director of the SRPMIC Family Advocacy Center. “We view the small nature of our closed community as a strength rather than a liability, because it helps us share information and not miss the red flags that could signal a child is in danger.”

CECANF was established by Public Law 112-275 (112th Congress), the Protect Our Kids Act of 2012. Commissioners will continue to hold public hearings around the country and ask tough questions with the goal of identifying the most and least effective federal, state, and tribal policies and practices impacting the prevention of child abuse and neglect fatalities, and how to prioritize prevention services for families with the greatest needs. To date, the Commission has hosted public meetings in San Antonio, TX; Tampa, FL; Detroit, MI; Denver, CO; Burlington, VT; Philadelphia, PA; and Portland, OR, along with a deliberation session in Phoenix, AZ and a Research Roundtable in Philadelphia, PA.

Additional meetings are planned for 2015 in Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin, and New York. For more information on the work of the Commission and information gathered during its public meetings, go to <http://eliminatechildabusefatalities.sites.usa.gov>.

The Commission is exploring federal, state, local, and tribal strategies and programs—across multiple social service systems—to reduce and help eliminate child abuse and neglect fatalities of children both known and not known to child protective services (CPS). Some of the Commission’s specific areas of study include:

- What is needed to better understand the nature of child maltreatment fatalities in order to inform research, practice, and policy for eliminating such fatalities?
- What does research tell us about the individual, family, community, and societal factors that influence the likelihood of a child abuse and neglect fatality?
- What programs, services, and interventions (including those in the fields of health, public health, law enforcement, the judiciary, mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence) positively impact individual caregiver risk factors, child vulnerabilities, and family dynamics that may lead to a fatality?
- What current federal legislation impacts the provision of programs, services, and interventions aimed at reducing child abuse and neglect fatalities?

Commission members welcome the opportunity to hear from stakeholders including advocacy leaders, legislators, local and county leaders, non-profit organizations, minority representatives including tribes, academics, law enforcement, judiciary, clergy, educators, parents, and victims on this issue. Comments can be submitted online via the Commission’s website.

The legislation mandates that the Commission submit a report to the President and Congress on these issues within two years (with the potential to extend the deadline by an additional year).

About The Commission

The Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities is a federal agency established by legislation to study and make recommendations on eliminating child abuse and neglect fatalities. The Commission was formed as a result of the “Protect Our Kids Act” and is made up of six Presidential appointees and six Congressional appointees. For more information, please go to <http://eliminatechildabusefatalities.sites.usa.gov>.

Media Notes: To request an interview with a member of the Commission or request more information about the Commission, please contact Jennifer Devlin at 703-876-1714 or Jennifer.devlin@CECANF.usa.gov.