

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to infant mortality; providing legislative  
3 intent relating to the black infant health practice  
4 initiative; providing definitions; providing objectives;  
5 providing for administration of the initiative; requiring  
6 a local community to develop a team to serve as a part of  
7 a statewide practice collaborative; requiring healthy  
8 start coalitions to conduct case reviews; requiring  
9 certain public universities or colleges to provide  
10 technical assistance, to assist in determining certain  
11 criteria, and to present findings and make  
12 recommendations; requiring the Department of Health to  
13 distribute funding to the coalitions; providing duties of  
14 each participating coalition; requiring the department to  
15 award grants; requiring the department to conduct an  
16 annual evaluation of the initiative; requiring each  
17 coalition to submit a report to the Governor, the  
18 Legislature, and the department; providing immunity from  
19 liability to participating coalitions; requiring the  
20 department to adopt rules; providing a timeframe for  
21 reviewing cases; providing an appropriation; providing an  
22 effective date.

23  
24 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that pregnancy, birth,  
25 and infant health outcomes are internationally recognized as  
26 measures of health for a community, as these outcomes are  
27 indicators of population sustenance, growth, and quality of  
28 life, and

29 WHEREAS, the Legislature also recognizes that infant  
 30 mortality disproportionately affects African-American infants,  
 31 as the resident infant mortality rate in 2005 for nonwhites is  
 32 12.5 per 1,000 live births, which is more than double the infant  
 33 mortality rate for whites, which is 5.3 per 1,000 live births,  
 34 and

35 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that a continued effort  
 36 to identify the causes of racial disparities in infant mortality  
 37 benefits all citizens of Florida, NOW, THEREFORE,

38  
 39 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

40  
 41 Section 1. Black infant health practice initiative.--

42 (1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.--It is the intent of the  
 43 Legislature to create a black infant health practice initiative.  
 44 The initiative shall include reviews of infant mortality in  
 45 select counties in this state in order to identify factors in  
 46 the health and social services systems contributing to higher  
 47 mortality rates among African-American infants. It is also the  
 48 intent of the Legislature that the initiative produce  
 49 recommendations on how to address the factors identified by the  
 50 reviews as contributing to these higher infant mortality rates.

51 (2) DEFINITIONS.--As used in this section, the term:

52 (a) "Coalition" means a federal or local healthy start  
 53 coalition or consortium.

54 (b) "Department" means the Department of Health.

55 (c) "FIMR" means a fetal and infant mortality review  
 56 committee.

57 (d) "Infant mortality" means the death of a live-born  
58 infant within 364 days after the infant's birth.

59 (e) "Infant mortality rate" means the number of infant  
60 deaths per 1,000 annual live births.

61 (3) OBJECTIVES.--The objectives of the initiative include:

62 (a) Determining the significant social, economic,  
63 cultural, safety, and health system factors that are associated  
64 with racial disparities in infant mortality rates through a  
65 practice collaborative approach using perinatal periods of risk  
66 and modified fetal infant mortality reviews.

67 (b) Developing a series of interventions and policies that  
68 address these factors to improve the service systems and  
69 community resources.

70 (c) Participating in the implementation of community-based  
71 interventions and policies that address racial disparities in  
72 infant mortality rates.

73 (d) Assessing the progress of interventions.

74 (4) ADMINISTRATION.--The black infant health practice  
75 initiative shall be administered through a collaboration among  
76 the department, federal and state healthy start coalitions, and  
77 public universities or colleges having expertise in public  
78 health. A local community shall develop an interdisciplinary  
79 team to serve as part of a statewide practice collaborative.  
80 Both perinatal periods of risk and fetal infant mortality  
81 reviews may be used. A case review shall be conducted by each  
82 participating healthy start coalition using professional in-  
83 house staff or through contracts with an outside professional.  
84 Public universities or colleges having expertise in public

85 health shall provide technical assistance in developing a  
86 standard research methodology based on the fetal and infant  
87 mortality review method. Public universities or colleges having  
88 expertise in public health shall assist each participating  
89 coalition in determining the selection of comparison groups,  
90 identifying data collection and housing issues, and presenting  
91 findings and recommendations. A single methodology for the  
92 reviews conducted through the initiative shall be used by each  
93 participating coalition. The department shall distribute funding  
94 to each coalition that participates in the initiative through  
95 annual grants that are subject to specific appropriations by the  
96 Legislature.

97 (5) FUNCTIONS OF THE INITIATIVE.--Each participating  
98 coalition shall:

99 (a) Develop an interdisciplinary team to oversee the  
100 process in its local community.

101 (b) Use perinatal periods of risk methodology when  
102 appropriate to examine infant deaths in its community.

103 (c) Use a modified FIMR approach to examine infant deaths  
104 in its community by:

105 1. Creating a case review FIMR team that may include  
106 obstetricians, neonatologists, perinatologists, pathologists,  
107 registered nurses, social workers, hospital and clinic  
108 administrators, social service agencies, researchers, citizens  
109 and consumers, and other experts considered necessary to conduct  
110 a standardized review of infant mortality.

111 2. Hiring or contracting with professional staff that may  
112 include licensed nurses and social workers to abstract and

113 present individual case reviews that omit identifying  
114 information regarding infant deaths compared to live births to  
115 the case review team.

116 3. Developing abstracts of sample infant mortalities and  
117 comparative live births that omit identifying information and  
118 that identify social, economic, cultural, safety, and health  
119 system factors that are associated with racial disparities in  
120 infant mortality rates. The number of abstracted cases that must  
121 be conducted by each participating coalition shall be determined  
122 by a standard research methodology developed in conjunction with  
123 a public university or college having expertise in public  
124 health.

125 4. Presenting abstracts that omit identifying information  
126 to its case review team at least quarterly for their review and  
127 discussion.

128 (d) Develop findings and recommendations for interventions  
129 and policy changes to reduce racial disparities in infant  
130 mortality.

131 (6) GRANT AWARDS.--The department shall award annual  
132 grants, subject to specific appropriations by the Legislature.  
133 The department shall award at least one grant to a coalition  
134 representing urban counties and at least one grant to a  
135 coalition representing rural counties. Priority of grant awards  
136 shall be given to those coalitions representing counties having  
137 an average nonwhite infant mortality rate at least 1.75 times  
138 greater than the white infant mortality rate between 2003 and  
139 2005 and an average of at least 40 nonwhite infant deaths  
140 between 2003 and 2005 for urban counties or an average of at

141 least 5 nonwhite infant deaths between 2003 and 2005 for rural  
142 counties.

143 (7) EVALUATIONS AND REPORTS.--The department shall conduct  
144 an annual evaluation of the implementation of the initiative  
145 describing which areas are participating in the initiative, the  
146 number of reviews conducted by each participating coalition,  
147 grant balances, and recommendations for modifying the  
148 initiative. All participating coalitions shall produce a report  
149 on their collective findings and recommendations by January 1,  
150 2010, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker  
151 of the House of Representatives, and the Secretary of Health.

152 (8) IMMUNITY.--Each participating coalition, its case  
153 review team members, and professional staff are immune from  
154 liability pursuant to s. 766.101, Florida Statutes.

155 (9) RULEMAKING.--The department shall adopt rules,  
156 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54, Florida Statutes,  
157 necessary to implement this section.

158 (10) IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE.--The department shall  
159 administer grants in a manner that will allow each participating  
160 coalition to begin reviewing cases no later than January 1,  
161 2008.

162 Section 2. The sum of \$1 million in nonrecurring revenue  
163 is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department  
164 of Health for the 2007-2008 fiscal year to implement the  
165 provisions of this act.

166 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.