

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Release on Thursday, October 27, 2016

The State's Child Advocate, Jennifer Griffith, has announced that she has appointed a panel of eight community professionals to conduct a multidisciplinary review of the death of a seven month old infant. This child was not in state custody at the time of the fatality, but was previously involved in a case that was open to the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). In addition, the panel will review the recent near-fatality of a seven month old child. In accordance with a new state law, R.I.G.L. § 42-73-2.3, enacted on July 6, 2016, the Office of the Child Advocate must convene a review panel after notification by DCYF of a child death or near fatality known to the Department. The Child Advocate has posted an announcement of the convening of the child fatality review panel on the Office of the Child Advocate website.

Griffith has asked the following individuals from a previous review panel to return to the newly convened group: Dr. Adam Pallant, a pediatrician at Hasbro Children's Hospital; Ken Fandetti, a retired DCYF administrator; and Darlene Allen, Executive Director of Adoption Rhode Island. Ms. Griffith has appointed new members to serve on the panel, including: Judge John E. McCann III, an Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Family Court; Attorney Janet Gilligan, Deputy Director of Rhode Island Legal Services and former legal counsel for the Department of Children, Youth and Families; Attorney Molly Kapstein Cote, a former Attorney General and a criminal defense attorney; Lisa Guillette, Executive Director of Foster Forward and Detective Michael Iacone, a Cranston Special Victims Unit Detective. In addition to the eight community members, Griffith, along with two members of her staff, Attorney Katelyn Medeiros and Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Kathryn Cortes, will serve as advising members of the review panel. Upon the conclusion of the review, the Office of the Child Advocate will issue a public report outlining the panel's findings and recommendations, without identifying the children or families involved in the cases under review.