

## Perinatal Mortality Guideline 1

### THE PERINATAL MORTALITY REVIEW PROCESS

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The Perinatal Mortality Section of the BCRCP Guidelines for Perinatal Care manual is designed to facilitate perinatal mortality review throughout British Columbia. In the 1996 BCRCP Hospital Survey, it was found that only 30% of hospitals providing obstetric and newborn services in British Columbia have a Perinatal Mortality Review Committee. In response to this, and to the many requests for assistance in the mortality review process from around the Province, the BCRCP formed the Subcommittee on Maternal and Perinatal Mortality. The objectives of this committee are:

- 1) to facilitate maternal and perinatal mortality review being performed on a regular basis throughout the province
- 2) to provide consultative advice to care providers and health authorities regarding the review process, as appropriate
- 3) to publish a regular Maternal and Perinatal Mortality Report.

The BCRCP promotes perinatal mortality review at the local level. If a facility has a very small number of perinatal deaths it may be appropriate for the review to be done at a regional or tertiary level. There may be situations when the local review committee may not be available to review a case or when the review committee may wish to consult further. In these situations, the case may be referred to a regional or tertiary care facility. To promote local and regional perinatal mortality review, *Guideline 2* in this section of the manual outlines suggested *Terms of Reference for Hospital Perinatal Mortality Review Committees*.

A major part of perinatal mortality review involves the classification of perinatal deaths. To promote a systematic and standard classification and review process, *Guideline 3, Classification of Perinatal Deaths*, is divided into three parts and each part addresses one aspect of classification. These parts include Definitions, Group Classification of Perinatal Deaths, and Classifying Preventability. A Perinatal Mortality Form for classifying perinatal deaths is included in the Appendices. The BCRCP **encourages that this form be completed for every perinatal mortality case at the time of the review.**

The intent is that the Perinatal Mortality Form can be used to collect data to input to the B.C. Perinatal Database Registry. This data will be used for the compilation of a regular B.C. Perinatal Mortality Report, similar to that currently published in Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Quebec. Review of perinatal mortality data will facilitate identification of problems that may need local, regional, or provincial initiatives to improve the quality of perinatal care. All patient and hospital identifiers are confidential and will not be released. A copy of the form may be sent to the BCRCP so that data entry can occur centrally.

Over the next few years, the Subcommittee on Maternal and Perinatal Mortality will evaluate the introduction of these guidelines. Constructive comments are welcome. Please feel free to contact the BCRCP with your comments, at (tel) 875-3737 or (fax) 875-3747.