**Office of the Chief Medical Examiner**

**Richmond, Virginia**

Meeting of the State Child Fatality Review Team

**November 8, 2016**

**Minutes**

**Members Present:**

**Beitz, Lisa**, Hanover County Community Services Board

**Board, Heather**, Virginia Department of Health

**Bowers, Jennifer**, Assistant Chief Medical Examiner

**\*Coyle, Betty Wade**, Prevent Child Abuse Virginia

**Foster, Robin,** Virginia College of Emergency Physicians

**Gormley, William, Chair,** Chief Medical Examiner

**Hunter, Katharine,** Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

**Miller-Hobbs, Corri**, VCU Health Systems – Safe Kids Virginia

**\*Parr, Nancy**, Commonwealth’s Attorney, City of Chesapeake

**Rose, Rutherfoord**, Virginia Poison Center

**Sobey, Kimberly**, Bland County Department of Social Services

**Sonenklar, Neil**, Virginia Treatment Center for Children

**Walter, Mary,** Virginia Department of Social Services

**Wilson, Mary,** Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

**Members Absent:**

**Blumberg, Michael**, Medical Society of Virginia

**Milteer, Regina,** American Academy of Pediatricians

**Phipps, Deron¸** Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

**Pickett, Jessica,** Fairfax County Fire & Rescue

**Rainey, Janet**, Division of Vital Records

**Saimre, Maribel**, Virginia Department of Education

**Invited Guests:**

**Collins, Jeannette,** Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**Hays, Michael,** Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**King, Caleb,** Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**Perkins, Ansley,** Virginia Department of Social Services

**Shipe, Tracy,** Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**Staff:**

**Ayres, Allison**, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**Powell, Virginia,** Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

\*Person participated via conference call.

Virginia Powell called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and went over the agenda for the day.

**Announcements and Business**

Minutes from the September 13, 2016 meeting were approved as written.

**Mary Walter** announced that the Virginia Department of Social Services has appointed a new Child Protective Services Program Manager, Christopher Spain, to replace Rita Katzman.

**Mary Wilson** announced that the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services is partnering with the Commonwealth’s Attorney Services Council and the Victim Network for a conference from April 12-13. The conference is entitled the “Intersection of Violence: Domestic Violence, Sexual Abuse, and Child Abuse”.

**Virginia Powell** announced that she and Allison Ayres attended the first annual stakeholders’ forum of the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet last month. One of the directions for the Children’s Cabinet in the future is to build state capacity and “access to prevention services, high quality physical and behavioral health, nutrition, early childhood programs, stable housing, workforce training, social services, and community supports through schools and other convenient points of services.”[[1]](#footnote-1) In his comments, Governor McAuliffe referenced children and their families’ needs for quality child care, additional home visiting programs, and rich and substantive educational opportunities for all children before kindergarten. The report and the Governor’s comments are consistent with many recommendations identified by the State Child Fatality Review Team over the years.

**Child Protective Services Update**

**Mary Walter** provided a presentation on the collaborative and prevention-focused work the Department of Social Services (DSS) has been doing in regards to substance exposed infants. The number of infants born substance exposed has been steadily increasing in Virginia, and DSS is working to respond to this crisis. In 2014, The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services was granted an *In Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA): Responses for Substance Exposed Infants* grant from the National Center for Substance Use and Child Welfare (NCSACW). Ms. Walter described that much of the coordinated effort on this problem has been organized through the Handle with C.A.R.E. (Coordinating Access – Responding Effectively) project, which was created to identify barriers and opportunities for Virginia to improve identification and response to substance using pregnant women. These opportunities include establishing statewide standards of care, strengthening community collaborations, increasing educational opportunities for professionals, increasing public awareness and education, strengthening legal reporting requirements, incorporating individual and family support services, and expanding treatment options and access.

DSS participated in this initiative to assist with developing guidelines for Opiate Treatment Programs to use when serving pregnant women and for Community Services Boards (CSBs) regarding maternal substance use and substance exposed infant referrals. Additionally, DSS is working to assist local departments in preparing Plans of Safe Care. The Plans of Safe Care identify five main points of intervention: before pregnancy, during pregnancy, at birth, during the neonatal period, and throughout childhood and adolescence. As a part of Plans of Safe Care, birthing hospitals will complete Hospital Discharge Plans for all substance exposed infants that will be monitored by CSBs and local social services departments. This collaborative approach requires systems to work together to provide coordinated care for the mother and child before, during, and after pregnancy. DSS has provided several workshops on the importance of developing Plans of Safe Care and put together a collaborative conference focused on educating organizations and agencies on the scope and complexity of maternal substance abuse and how systems can work together to address this issue.

Ms. Walter noted that Plans of Safe Care are required by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and are not the same as child safety plans prepared by DSS in response to allegations of child abuse and neglect. In 2017, guidelines, protocols, and best practices will be developed, reviewed, and regularly monitored to assist local departments in providing appropriate care for substance exposed infants, their mothers, and their families. Through these efforts, DSS hopes to become compliant with CAPTA and continue to improve outcomes for substance using mothers and substance exposed infants in the Commonwealth.

The Department is also considering a legislative proposal that will strengthen their capacity to investigate substance exposed infant cases. Finally, Ms. Walter recognized Martha Kurgans from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services for her hard work, leadership, and advocacy on the Handle with C.A.R.E. initiative.

**Discuss the Vetting of Recommendations from Poisoning Review and Begin Reviews for Child Drowning Deaths.**

The Team went into confidential session to discuss the vetting of their recommendations and to continue their review of drowning cases in Virginia.

The next Team meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, January 10, 2016.** Ms. Ayres will poll the Team via a meeting invite and get another January date on the schedule.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Allison Ayres, MPH*

1. Virginia Governor’s Children’s Cabinet Annual Report 2015-2016. Available at https://hhr.virginia.gov/media/7999/virginia-governors-childrens-cabinet-2015-16-annual-report\_final.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)