

Child Fatality Committee  
State Board of Social Services  
February 20, 2013  
2:00 PM

**Present**

Trudy Brisendine, Robert (Bob) Spadaccini, Jim Pope, Willie Greene, Margaret Schultze, Al Wilson, Alex Kamberis, Karin Clark, Virginia Powell, William (Bill) Henderson, Thomas Atwood, Mary Walter, Paul McWhinney, & Emily Gambill

**Absent**

Rita Katzman, Joann Wilson-Harfst, Tommy Casteel, Maggi Luca, & Wayne Handley

**Call to Order**

Trudy Brisendine called the meeting to order as the new Chair and introduced the new members of the Committee.

**Minutes**

By consensus, the committee agreed to accept the minutes.

**Regional Child Fatality Review Teams Update**

Dr. Powell provided a regional update on the status of the five review teams and provided a brief update to the new members of the committee. To date, it has been sixteen months since the four teams outside of the Tidewater region were created. The initial training for the regional teams was in October 2011 and the teams have been reviewing cases March through December of 2012. All fatalities from FY2011 have been reviewed and four of the five teams have supplied their recommendations to the State Fatality Review Team. The last one (Central Region) will be submitted tomorrow. The State Report is due 4/1 and will be shared at the next Fatality Committee meeting in April.

Next year, the data collected through each regional team will be put on software utilized around the country (National Child Death Tool). There are some “hiccups” with the software but full implementation is planned for the next review cycle. The software will include a report to show any connections between fatalities and previous CPS and/or TANF cases.

Dr. Powell pointed out that a lot has been accomplished over the last 16 months. The teams were convened, trained and reviewed all fatalities in the year under review. There was a lot of work involved in pulling this project together. The teams are individually and collectively discussing what worked and what needs improvement. The multi-disciplinary input has been highlighted as a strength of the Virginia model and some areas have done better than others. As conclusions about needs are reached, there will need to be a balance between local and state needs. Local CPS supervisors are asking for training in child fatality investigations, and are self-identifying a

need to improve practice in investigating fatalities. Mary Walters pointed out that CPS policy has been updated to address the roles and responsibilities of team members during the regional fatality reviews.

### **Resting on the Record**

Jim Pope reports that there are no current “resting on the record” needs. The communication provided from the OAG (Al Wilson) is sufficient to address questions from previous committee meetings.

### **Regional Child Fatality Team Conference**

Dr. Powell reminded the committee of the conference for the regional teams on the afternoon of April 30 through noon on May 2, 2012. This will be a joint effort between the OCME, VDSS, and the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

### **Ongoing Challenges found by the Review Teams**

1. Currently, the reviews are very CPS focused and not as multi-disciplinary as they could be. Focus should also be placed on those involved with the family prior to and immediately after the fatality.
2. Collaboration with law enforcement is a definite need. Though present to some extent in some localities, there is a range found across the state.
3. How best to address prevention issues and how to influence external partners. This is an acute issue in the Western and Piedmont regions.
4. There is a steep learning curve with the National Database software/tool.
5. The workload of Regional CPS Specialists involved in these reviews is significant and needs to be acknowledged. Especially since this work is in addition to their regular duties.
6. Coverage for the reviews when a specialist is unable to attend.

### **Next Steps**

Possibly invite Dr. Foster from Richmond to the April committee meeting.

Fill position at VDSS to analyze the fatality reviews and provide a state-wide analysis.

Invite the Director of Health Professions to a future meeting.

### **Future Meeting Date**

April 18, 2012 at 1:30pm

Petersburg DSS