

Child Fatality Committee  
State Board of Social Services  
August 16, 2012  
2:00 PM

**Present**

Robert (Bob) Spadaccini, Trudy Brisendine, Jim Pope, Willie Greene, Margaret Schultze, Al Wilson, Alex Kamberis, , Tina Cruz, Betty Wade-Coyle, Karen Clark, Virginia Powell, Janine Sewell, Rita Katzman, Judy Kurtz, William (Bill) Henderson.

**Absent**

Joann Wilson-Harfst, Tommy Casteel, Maggi Luca, Therese Wolf, Wayne Handley, Emily Gambill, Jack Ledden

**Call to Order**

(Robert) Bob Spadaccini called the meeting to order and informed the committee that Mrs. Trudy Brisendine will be the new “Chair” for the committee and Mr. Willie Greene will be the “Vice Chair” for the committee. He will remain a member of the committee but will no longer be the chair because he is taking on other commitments including chairing the State Board of Social Services.

**Minutes**

By consensus, the committee agreed to accept the minutes.

**Regional Child Fatality Review Teams Update**

Rita Katzman provided the committee with an update on the status of the regional child fatality review teams. All regional teams have held at least two meetings where cases were reviewed and technical assistance is being provided by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) and the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). Most teams have a diverse group of members including local CPS directors and supervisors, OCME, law enforcement officers, nurses, pediatricians, mental health, etc. Several teams have had a problem getting a commitment from law enforcement and Dr. Leah Bush, Chief Medical Examiner has drafted a letter to the chiefs of police and sheriffs associations, and to the Commonwealth Attorneys Association requesting their participation.

Ms. Katzman reported that on August 10, 2012, OCME and VDSS staff provided refresher training for the CPS regional consultants on a review of the policy, procedures and best practices for child fatality review. Some of the outstanding issues identified by the regional consultants and the OCME and VDSS staff include:

- Getting the right people at the table for the review, ie CPS, law enforcement, medical, ME, mental health, if appropriate.
- Preparing workers for the presentation – learning how and what to present.

- Organizing and meeting preparation – how to handle when worker and/or supervisor is no longer at the agency; emergencies – court; deciding how many cases can be covered and what kind of cases – # founded; # unfounded.
- Facilitation skills – these skills are different from running a meeting – balancing the need to tell the “story”, but get to the systemic factors, prevention strategies, and recommendations.
- Still clarifying the role of the CPS regional consultant as the chair of the team; ie responsibility to contact the commonwealth attorneys in each case.
- Clarifying issues of confidentiality
- Accurately completing the National Child Death Review Tool.

Ms. Katzman stated that the Teams have been provided with the child fatality cases to be reviewed in 2013. There were 88 child fatalities investigated by local departments of social services from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. To date, 27 were founded; 44 unfounded; and 16 are still pending. The regional breakdown is as follows:

• Eastern	55
• Central	6
• Western	11
• Northern	9
• Piedmont	7

Overall, the teams are still in a learning mode. Ms. Katzman reminded the committee that the CPS regional consultants have a number of other responsibilities along with facilitating the teams. The OCME and VDSS staff is pleased with the progress being made and are committed to continue the technical assistance and support of the teams.

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

Dr Powell shared with the committee that plans are underway to host a conference for the regional team’s from April 30 through noon on May 2, 2013. This will be a joint effort between the OCME, VDSS, and the Department of Criminal Justice Services. A draft agenda will be provided to the committee in December.

### **Status of the Recommendations Made by the State Child Fatality Review Team to VDSS**

Ms. Katzman provided the committee with a report on what actions were taken on the recommendations made by the State Child Fatality Review Teams in past years. Attached is a copy of the report. As a result of the report, the committee made several recommendations.

- 1) Request the State Board of Social Services to support proposed legislation to extend the time frame for making a finding in a child fatality case when the agency is awaiting the

results from the toxicology studies. (Jim Pope has agreed to draft some proposed language.)

- 2) Request the State Board of Social Services to approve the proposed FTE for the intensive study of child abuse related fatalities.
- 3) Request the State Board of Social Services to recommend that child care providers follow a best practice to contact parents and caretakers if a child who is expected at a child day center or family day care home does not arrive at the expected time.

### **Resting on the Record**

Mr. Wilson provided feedback regarding guidance to localities on “resting on the record” in appeal situations. Mr. Pope stated that he understood the need for generality in the guidance and that this decision needed to be on a case by case basis.

### **Next Step**

Possible guest: Director of Health Professions

### **Future Meeting Date**

Central Regional Office (Santa Rosa Rd)

December 13, 2012 at 2pm

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.