

Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel

Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

MINUTES

Members Present: Hon. Benjamin Harrison, Chair; Commissioner Lesa Dennis, Department for Community Based Services; Sen. Danny Carroll, State Senate; Dr. Christina Howard, Child Abuse Pediatrician, University of Kentucky; Matt Belcher, State Child Fatality Review Team; Dr. Henrietta Bada, Department for Public Health; Nicole Smith Abbott, LCSW; Victoria Bengé, Executive Director, CASA; Steven Shannon, Executive Director, KARP; Dr. Melissa Currie, Chief, Norton Children's Pediatric Protection Specialist; Det. Jason Merlo, Kentucky State Police; Dr. Danielle Anderson, MAT Provider; and Hon. Olivia McCollum, Boone County Assistant Attorney

Welcome and Introductions

Hon. Benjamin Harrison, Chair

Chair Harrison welcomed everyone to the April meeting. He introduced Matt Belcher to the group; he is Jan Bright's replacement from the State Child Fatality Review Team from the Department of Public Health. Matt Belcher introduced himself as the Population Health Branch Manager with Maternal Child Health at DPH. As part of the Department's reallocation of workload, adolescents and pediatrics is now part of the Population Health team. He's happy to be here and looking forward to working with the panel.

Chair Harrison advised members the June 17 meeting will be in-person at ZeroV in Frankfort. He reminded members it's the same location as the March in-person meeting. At your earliest convenience, please let Elisha know if you plan to attend. Chair Harrison turned it over to Casey Reed for an update on the SFY24 data.

Data Review

Casey Reed, Epidemiologist, DPH

Casey thanked everyone for having her and shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding the most recent panel data as of March 28, 2025. To date, the panel has reviewed 50 cases for SFY24. Neglect continues to be the highest rated type of case reviewed by the panel. Among the 50 cases reviewed for this SFY, every case had some element of neglect and almost half of the case were overdose/ingestion. As you can see by the next slide, the youngest age of children are primarily affected by abusive head trauma, neglect, overdose/ingestion, and physical abuse. This graph illustrates firearm injuries typically occur at a higher rate in older children. The next slide illustrates that accidental firearm injuries occur at a higher rate in the 1–4-year-old range. There has been a spike in the 10–14-year-old age group with homicide and unfortunately, we are seeing an increase in suicides, even in the younger age groups. The next slide illustrates the top family characteristics, which includes DCBS issues as the top issue with financial issues as the next highest rated characteristic. The last slide illustrates the final panel determination, which indicates neglect general is the highest rated determination. Keep in mind all this data will fluctuate as more cases are reviewed and this is just a quick update of the current data. The PowerPoint

presentation will be uploaded to SharePoint. If you have any questions or additional thoughts on future data presentations, please email Elisha and/or Casey know.

Chair Harrison thanked Casey for her presentation. Next on the agenda, is the Minutes and case reviews from the March meeting. Steve Shannon made a motion to approve the Minutes and Case reviews, which was seconded by Commissioner Lesa Dennis. With no objections, the March Minutes and Case Reviews stand as submitted.

Seeing no additional business we will move onto the pending cases.

Pending Case Updates:

F-013-24-C – Cindy Curtsinger provided a quick update of the original review. Commissioner advised the panel there was a safety plan in place and the family was agreeable to participating in services. Staff was waiting for body cam footage and additional information in order to file a petition. Due to pending criminal charges, they were not able to obtain that information. Additionally, staff were awaiting autopsy results to determine if the medications attributed to the death.

NF-020-24-C – Cynthia Hildebrandt provided a quick update regarding the original case review. Commissioner advised the panel this appeared to be an isolated incident with the family and there were some concerns about the timeframe of the event. Dr. Currie commented the concern is not necessarily the time in which the child was unsupervised but the fact the dangerous substance was left out accessible to children. The incident could have still occurred in a much shorter timeframe, but she understands the Cabinet's response and appreciates the follow-up.

Case Reviews:

The following cases were reviewed by the Panel. A case summary of findings and recommendations are attached and made a part of these minutes.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Case #</u>	<u>Analyst</u>
3	F-031-24-NC	Jennifer Burke
2	F-040-24-C	Jennifer Burke
4	F-055-24-C	Jennifer Burke
1	NF-037-24-C	Jennifer Burke
2	NF-038-24-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
4	NF-051-24-NC	Cynthia Hildebrandt
3	NF-061-24-NC	Cynthia Hildebrandt
1	F-022-24-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
2	F-047-24-C	Jennifer Burke
3	NF-042-24-C	Jennifer Burke
1	F-044-24-C	Jennifer Burke
4	NF-041-24-NC	Jennifer Burke

*The following cases set for review on the April agenda will be reviewed at the upcoming May meeting: F-029-24-C, NF-078-24-NC, NF-067-24-NC, and NF-033-24-C.

Additional Discussion:

Potential recommendation: Additional training for medical providers regarding medically complex children and signs of potential neglect. DCBS may need to explore policy changes to involve child abuse pediatrics programs to help assist with the assessment of children with complex medical needs. Medical examiners may need additional training to identify potential neglect in medically complex kids. There are massive educational gaps across the medical fields regarding these vulnerable children. Additional discussion regarding expanding resources, especially within Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care (PPEC).

Motion to adjourn made by Steve Shannon and seconded by Olivia McCollum. With no objections meeting adjourned.

Next meeting Tuesday, May 20, 2025.