

Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel

Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

MINUTES

Members Present: Hon. Benjamin Harrison, Chair; Dr. Christina Howard, Child Abuse Pediatrician, University of Kentucky; Dr Jaime Pittenger Kirtley, Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky; Dr. Elizabeth Salt, Citizen Foster Care Review Board; Dr Lyndsey Neese, Department for Public Health; Hon. Olivia McCollum, Practicing Local Prosecutor; Heather McCarty, Family Resource and Youth Service Center; Dr. Danielle Anderson, Practicing Medication-Assisted Treatment; Victoria Bengé, Executive Director, CASA; Nicole Smith Abbott, LCSW; Steve Shannon, Executive Director, KARP, Inc.; Lt. Jonathan Murphy, Kentucky State Police, Post 9; Brittany Nichols, State Child Fatality Review Team; Dr. William Ralson, Chief Medical Examiner, OME; Judge Libby Messer, Fayette Family Court and Melanie Taylor, Division Director, proxy for DCBS Commissioner.

Welcome

Hon. Benjamin Harrison, Chair

Chair Harrison welcomed everyone to the March meeting. First item of business on the agenda is the approval of the Minutes and Case reviews from the February meeting. Dr. Elizabeth Salt made a motion to approve the Minutes and Case Review Summaries, which was seconded by Dr. Christina Howard. With no objections, the February Minutes and Case Review Summaries stand as approved.

Legislative Oversight & Investigations Committee Update

Chair Harrison advised members, he and Elisha met with committee staff a few weeks ago to discuss this year's review. Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee staff would like to send a survey to all panel members asking for feedback and suggestions regarding panel operations. The survey will be sent out after the meeting, and the deadline will be April 7th.

Case Management System Update

Elisha met with COT last week and we have moved to the testing and validation phase of the project. Staff will begin testing the system over the next three weeks before moving into the migration phase. Once the validation is completed, a meeting will be scheduled with DCBS staff regarding the new case management system and case creation process. Additionally, COT personnel will conduct a training session for all panel members before the new system goes live.

Friendly reminder, the May 19th meeting will be held in-person at ZeroV, which is located at 111 Darby Shire Circle in Frankfort. Special thanks to Tisha Pletcher for allowing us to use their facilities.

Chair Harrison announced this is his final meeting and he is honored to have chaired the panel. Chair Harrison thanked everyone for their time, effort, and work to ensure the meetings go as smoothly and to

help the children of our commonwealth. Chair Harrison thanked Judge Odgen for assuming the role as chairperson and wished everyone the best.

Pending Cases:

NF-106-25-NC – Melanie Taylor stated that all out of state placements are guided by interstate compact. Federal guidelines state that only children in custody of DCBS are allowed to be placed out of state, however in this case the child was not in DCBS custody. DCBS should follow best practice for all placements including the minimally required background checks, a walkthrough of the home, and initiate the official safety check and review process. In this particular case, Kentucky does have a border agreement with that state.

NF-090-25-C – Since the last meeting the father in this case pled guilty to an amended charge which is a misdemeanor. Medical neglect will be added due to failure to render aid.

F-002-25-C – After receiving additional law enforcement records, lack of thorough investigation will be added.

NF-121-25-NC – After reviewing law enforcement records, lack of investigation will be added to this case.

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>
1	F-004-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
2	NF-017-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
3	NF-023-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
4	NF-006-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
4	F-024-25-C	Jennifer Burke
3	NF-045-25-C	Jennifer Burke
2	NF-062-25-C	Jennifer Burke
1	F-005-25-C	Jennifer Burke
1	F-012-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
2	NF-031-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
3	NF-026-25-NC	Cynthia Hildebrandt
4	NF-038-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
3	NF-034-25-C	Emily Neal
4	F-017-25-C	Jennifer Burke
2	NF-081-25-C	Jennifer Burke
1	NF-124-25-C	Jennifer Burke
1	NF-075-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
2	NF-076-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt
3	NF-069-25-C	Cynthia Hildebrandt

4
4
3

NF-153-25-C
NF-024-25-C
F-051-25-C

Cynthia Hildebrandt
Cynthia Hildebrandt
Jennifer Burke

Additional Discussion:

Motion to adjourn made by Steve Shannon and seconded by Dr. Howard. Everyone thanked Chair Harrison for his service and with no objections meeting adjourned.

DRAFT