

Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel

Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

MINUTES

Members Present: Hon. Melissa Moore Murphy, Chair; Commissioner Marta Miranda-Straub, Department for Community Based Services, CHFS; Hon. Dawn Blair, Assistant Hardin County Attorney; Dr. Jaime Pittenger Kirtley, Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky; Dr. Christina Howard, Child Abuse Pediatrician, University of Kentucky, Betty Pennington, Family Resource and Youth Service Center; Dr. William Ralston, Chief Medical Examiner; Janice Bright, RN, State Child Fatality Review Team; Lori Aldridge, Executive Director, Tri County CASA; Steve Shannon, Executive Director, KARP; Angela Yannelli, CEO, Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Detective Jason Merlo, Kentucky State Police; Judge Libby Messer, Fayette Family Court; Dr. Elizabeth Salt, Citizens Foster Care Review Board; and Dr. David Lohr, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Welcome:

Hon. Melissa Moore Murphy, Chair

Judge Murphy welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining the meeting. Panel members were introduced to the newest member, Dr. Elizabeth Salt, who represents the Citizens Foster Care Review Board. Judge Murphy asked if anyone had any changes to the Agenda, Minutes, or Case Review Summaries, if not she'll entertain a motion. Dawn Blair made a motion to accept the Minutes and Case Review Summaries from the March 16th meeting. The motion was seconded by Lori Aldridge and the Minutes and Case Review Summaries will stand as submitted.

COVID Impact on Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities

Panel members discussed how to collect data in order to track the impact of the COVID pandemic on child fatality and near fatality cases. They also discussed how to track the racial trauma and opioid pandemic affecting the Commonwealth. Dr. Howard recently attended a National Conference where several individuals presented on child maltreatment during COVID. When these individuals looked at hospital codes, they did not find a significant increase in child maltreatment numbers overall. However, they mainly focused on the younger age groups. Literature shows that families facing economic struggles has a higher risk for child maltreatment. However, never has our country been through this type of stress and had stay at home orders in place. Perhaps, older siblings being at home and potential witnesses to maltreatment has led to an overall decrease. However, there is still a concern that the severity of cases will increase among families. The panel does currently link sibling maltreatment cases.

Dr. Salt informed the panel about a recent study completed at UK where they extracted data regarding child abuse using the hospital codes. The study showed there was an increase of sexual abuse cases and she was only aware of one additional study that suggested an increase rate of abusive head trauma cases.

Commissioner Miranda-Straub informed the panel that even though they saw a decrease in child maltreatment reporting initially, they did begin to stabilize around June. However, the severity of the cases and the human

trafficking allegations have increased. Unfortunately, a lot of the severe cases do not reach this panel if they are not determined to be a near fatality. Panel members discussed the increase in cases where older siblings are the caretakers during the time of the event. The data tool will be updated in order to capture those cases where an incident occurs while under the supervision of a sibling. The panel acknowledged most of the issues that have been brought to light due to the pandemic are currently tracked in their data tool. However, they would like to contract an epidemiologist to analyze their data and identify any trends pre and post COVID.

Betty Pennington advised the panel of the struggles that have been documented by school counselors. School officials documented the lack of daycare as a high stress factor for families and the difficulties of accessing the virtual classrooms. They have documented an increase of older siblings being responsible for younger sibling's educational needs while the caretaker is trying to work from home. There are still a number of students that have not had any contact with the school systems since the start of the pandemic. Unfortunately, they do not have an accurate number of those students at this time. The panel is curious to know how many families are homeschooling their children now.

Judge Murphy asked members if their respective entities are currently conducting any research regarding the impact of COVID on Kentucky's families to please share their findings with the panel.

Case Review:

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-012-20-C	Joel Griffith
2	F-034-20-C	Joel Griffith
3	F-040-20-C	Joel Griffith
4	F-041-20-C	Joel Griffith
1	F-043-20-C	Joel Griffith
2	F-044-20-C	Joel Griffith
3	F-049-20-C	Joel Griffith
4	NF-033-20-C	Joel Griffith
1	NF-048-20-C	Joel Griffith
2	NF-065-20-C	Joel Griffith

Additional Discussion:

Meeting adjourned