



STATE OF WISCONSIN

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC ABUSE

P.O. BOX 1185 • MADISON, WISCONSIN 53701 • TELEPHONE (608) 266-0700

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC ABUSE
Legislative and Policy Committee
WI Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative
MEETING MINUTES
1/13/25
11:00am – 12:00pm

Meeting was held virtually

Council Members Present:

Elizabeth Lucas

Committee Members Present:

Courtney Olson- WDVFRI Chair; Rainbow House Director

Jenna Gormal

Kelsey Mullins

Holland Dvorak

Anne Kessenich

Jamie Sathasivam

Charles Vear

Michelle Coppens

Miriam Falk

Karate Zubeck

Stephanie Prevost

Leanna Liska

Constance Kostelac

Suzi Schoenhof

Zanovia McKinley

Guests:

Nathan Schwanz

Nathan Berken

DCF/Governor's Council Staff Present: None

Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

A new legislative session started early January – we will review AB188.

Medical College of Wisconsin mentions that there is an updated draft of AB188 that incorporates some amendments – one of which lists domestic abuse homicide/IPV/community violence as a reviewable fatality type.

Documents were added to the zoom chat.

The updated bill includes clarification that fatality review teams can be at the municipal or county level.

The administering agency will continue to be DHS. Domestic abuse, IPV, and community violence is included – so that it catches deaths that are not statutorily categorized as domestic abuse.

DHS has not been made aware of or consulted on the changes.

Request made by participant that domestic violence fatalities be used as a term instead of DV homicide. Questions were asked on funding or financial support in the updated bill - there's currently zero funding in the bill for DHS to execute fatality review teams.

Suicide is covered as a reviewable death. Participant asked if death was considered suicide, could it fall under the DV fatality review team? Some teams review suicide and overdose together as an example and there aren't restrictions for where certain reviews should fall. The language is intentionally ambiguous. Domestic abuse doesn't cover all kinds of domestic violence, which is why this new legislation is trying to be broad – we would want to make sure that the language will incorporate dating relationships. Domestic abuse in statute may not be inclusive enough. We should add something in the legislative notes about abuse/violence to say that we don't want to be limited to statute.

Discussion of 'community violence' - anything that does not necessarily fall under the family but could include bystanders to DV. For example, the Waukesha Christmas parade.

Questions about other states – most states have legislation that is specific to the fatality review subject matter.

There are confidentiality concerns that are unique to domestic violence – Marsy's Law etc. There may be questions about when cases should be staffed so the review doesn't interfere with ongoing cases.

Discussion on confidentiality concerns.

'Shall' vs 'May' issue: has been one of the key factors of getting groups to support the bill. MCW would not support the change to 'shall'. MCW believes that 'shall' would prevent the legislation from passing.

Questions on why tribal law enforcement are not included in the bill.

Discussions with law enforcement by MCW have been extensive.

It is suggested by a member that it can be helpful for advocacy agencies to be specifically included in the member list (social service agencies are included - noted that the language is vague). What would be a term that could be used to describe DV agencies.

Vast majority of DV advocates are not social workers – advocacy is seen as a distinct role. Questions from members about the value of having specific DV advocates involved in the process instead of social worker – example provided of ROI's that a DV advocate would have versus CPS. Want to make sure we are using broad terms – suggestion: *non-governmental victim service provider*, to make sure we are including sexual assault and human trafficking victims etc.

End Domestic Abuse WI reported that they would not be able to support a bill that could shut down existing fatality review initiatives that do not operate 'under the auspices of DHS' as is written in AB188.

Holland Dvorak was not able to present on DVHF due to time constraints.

Adjourn

Minutes submitted by Jenna Gormal, Public Policy Director, End Domestic Abuse WI