



STATE OF WISCONSIN

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC ABUSE

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GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC ABUSE
Legislative and Policy Committee
WI Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative
MEETING MINUTES
May 12, 2025

Meeting was held virtually

Council Members Present: Brenda Fraser

Committee Members Present: Courtney Olsen, Holland Dvorak, Dana World-Patterson, Kelsey Mullins, Jamie Sathasivam, Charles Vear, Leeana Liska, Stephanie Provost, Leah Forlenza

DCF/Governor's Council Staff Present: None

Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Items to Bring Forward to Committee

Training in person:

Last time we met, there was a discussion around a 2 day, in-person training with Dr. Websdale. Due to funding, we will take the training online.

Topics Discussed

Current Bill 2025-

- Current Bill is an umbrella fatality review team- it is intended to cover deaths more than domestic violence.
- AB 188- got stuck last February and this is a new iteration of that bill.
- DHS team MCW got the bill reinitiated and basically- Connie was not able to join us this morning outline where they are
 - We have support from Senator Jessie James.
 - In speaking with Jenna Gormal, End Abuse's Public Policy Director, suggested moving forward with the umbrella approach. We work with DHS once in place
- The bill includes a fiscal estimate for \$374,700 to secure 4 positions to support the fatality review initiative.
 - Please see funding request for allocation and positions.

Specific Concerns:

- Local fatality review teams operating outside of the DHS can continue their work. Previous iteration implied teams working outside of the DHS would be considered rogue. This new bill does include the "rogue team" language.
- Question around Language: May vs Shall
- Confidentiality and what information can be brought to/shared by the teams. This current language spells out the protections that are in alignment with dv fatality confidentiality and protections for victim and families.

Public Policy Thoughts are shared-

- Courtney shared thoughts from Jenna Gormal regarding the legislation. End Abuse will support the fiscal request by DHS. See attached.
- The current bill is moving through the legislator and senate. We do not want to offer a competing bill/language. Keeping in mind that this is the third time this bill or- alike bill has been introduced.
- Looking into the future if this is not passed- thoughts on a reintroduction of a stand-alone bill.
- WI ranks 7th in the nation domestic violence related homicide.
 - Wisconsin is one of the few states that does not have a statewide fatality review initiative.
 - It would be interesting to see the correlation between a coordinated statewide response and the rates of dv homicides.
- We are one in 4 that does not have a statewide fatality initiative.
- Mississippi recently passed their bill. Had a DV specific approach.
 - The umbrella is a novel approach and unique in nature.
 - The CDC recommends having a standalone DV homicide response team.
- Local MDTs and Tribes can opt in when needed and requested support.
- Wisconsin's bill would give the DHS responsibility for this. The fatality review board meetings are not beholden to "open meetings" rules. We are looking to DHS to educate the public on the importance of non-public facing meetings for the safety of the victims and families. DHS will offer annual feedback to the legislature, and we are not including case specific data. Only time frame, aggregate and other non-identifiable information.

Points of Discussion-

- Grateful that there is financial support for the 4 positions.
- Concerns around stability around the funding and how long does this funding last
- What the budgetary request may look from a time frame- how long do we have this money. What is commitment.
- Uncertainty around the climate of future and stable funding.
- We do have bipartisan support for this bill. Optimism is was shared about this bill passing because this is a needed initiative.

June's Agenda:

- Is our team in support of this bill and bring back to Connie and her team. What can we do to help support this bill move forward as the DV fatality review?
 - Varies expertise to help strengthen and support the initiatives.
 - What does DHS and the Medical College need from us?
- We are not able to lobby as non-profits and representatives from government agencies, but we can educate.
 - How can we share our story?
 - Change of Venue- advocacy for advocates, EMS, Court personnel, have the right to change to another judicial venue for safety and professional integrity.
- educating vs. lobbying. We can share information to inform legislators about the importance of this bill.
- Create a one pager with legislators to distribute
- Dr. Websdale to offer a one-page summary for our legislators. Ask for stats and impact between having a statewide fatality review vs. not having a statewide response.
- Social Media outreach- how to share our story- facts to call your people to advocate that this is needed.
- Sharing update trends. Wisconsin 52% of homicide by gun violence. This has dropped and have been higher rates of homicide by stabbing.

Other Business

Updated Stats:

No longer using stats- 1 in 6 homicides happen in Wisconsin

**We will be using this statistic: Wisconsin is ranked 7th in the nation for DV related homicides

Adjourn