

## LOUISIANA DOMESTIC ABUSE FATALITY REVIEW (LA-DAFR) PANEL MEETING MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Louisiana State Police Headquarters, 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, Conference Room 3000

**In-person Attendees:** Dawn Joseph (DAFR Coordinator), Sarah Anders (DAFR Abstractor), Belinda Murphy, Cassandra Billiot, Melanie Fields, Cherrise Picard, Anna Watt, Bonnie McKneely, Jane Killen, Pam Guidry, Ellen Conner, Kristen Sanderson, Doug Champlin, Mimi Mickel, Mariah Wineski, Leslie Lyons, Jennifer Hunt

**Zoom Attendees:** Anjell DeGruy, LeJeune Johnson, Robert Hanser, Vandana Chaturvedi

**Absent:** Jill Sessions, Sara Halphen, Joycelyn Johnson, Robyn Landry, Maeve Wallace, Francis Robinson, Ramona Harris, Ashley Williams

**The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.**

The meeting was facilitated by the Domestic Abuse Fatality Review Chairperson, Captain Belinda Murphy, who then proceeded with Roll Call. It was determined a quorum (14 of 20 panel members) was present. The DAFR Coordinator, Panel members, Agents, and prospective Agents to the Panel introduced themselves. Everyone welcomed first time attendee, Cassandra Billiot, RN, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner for the Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office.

Time was allotted for public comment. No comment was made during this time.

Meeting attendees silently read a copy of the meeting minutes from the DAFR meeting held on 05/15/24. A motion was made by Belinda Murphy to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Doug Champlin and approved by the majority.

### **Business:**

The Panel welcomed the newly hired DAFR Abstractor, Sarah Anders:

- Sarah Anders is from Maryland and married to a native of Baton Rouge. She and her husband have 4 children, 3 have flown the coop and the youngest is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Sarah has a BA in Community Health and Health Care Management. She is also certified as a medical biller and coder and worked as a paramedic for the East Baton Rouge Parish EMS for 10 years. Her previous experience is in Childhood Injury Prevention where she served as the Executive Director of Safe KIDS Louisiana at the Office of Public Health. She enjoys research, learning new things and is excited to jump into this position as an Abstractor!

Following a congratulatory round of applause, welcoming Sarah to the DAFR Team, Anjell DeGruy gave us a brief overview of the Bureau of Family Health's Pregnancy Associated Mortality Review:

- The **Louisiana Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review (PAMR)** works to quantify and understand pregnancy-associated deaths in order to create actionable, comprehensive recommendations to prevent future deaths. This is accomplished through epidemiological surveillance and multidisciplinary case review.
- The Louisiana Maternal Mortality Review Committee reviews all pregnancy-associated deaths of Louisiana residents, regardless of the cause of death. A pregnancy-associated death is the death of a woman that occurs during pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy, regardless of the cause. The PAMR and DAFR Teams work together to review deaths that fall under the pregnancy-associated mortality definition when the loss of life was as a result of domestic abuse.

Dawn then shared that the two PAMR deaths that the Panel would be reviewing also included the addition of Informant Interviews. She then asked that LeJeune Johnson, LCSW and Informant Interviewer for the PAMR to introduce herself and explain a bit more about Informant Interviews. She touched on the following points:

- **What are Informant Interviews?** LeJeune talks to families to learn more about how maternal death has affected them and their communities. This helps us understand issues women may have faced while pregnant, during pregnancy, birth or afterwards.
- **Raising our Voices:** The stories shared by family members are powerful. Informant interviews allow family members to share their loved one's story, honor their memory, and contribute to a bigger conversation about improving maternal health.
- **Motivation for Positive Outcomes:** Conversations with families help our PAMR Committee members understand information that can't be found in medical records alone. These talks help PAMR Committee members understand data from other sources. With the information families provide, we can look at their loved one's story with a better understanding.

Capt. Murphy then reviewed the Panel's Guiding Principles, Functions, and Confidentiality Requirements. With no members of the public present, panel members, agents, and the PAMR Team took a brief break and prepared for case review. Captain Murphy asked meeting attendees to take a moment of silence in honor of the victims and survivors of domestic violence in Louisiana. After a brief moment of silence, the Panel and Agents reviewed a total of two pregnancy-associated homicides, one multiple-victim homicide, and four homicides due to domestic violence. They also determined:

- Contributing risk factors that were preventable
- Recommendations to prevent deaths from similar causes or circumstances in the future
- Additional information about the fatality that would have been helpful to know

The Panel thanked LeJeune, sharing that the informant interviews were very helpful and were a wonderful addition to the case summaries. She thanked them and shared that both of the mothers she interviewed were more than willing to share their daughter's stories if sharing their story could save lives. Dawn added that we are hoping to incorporate informant interviews into all of our DAFR cases very soon. Following case review, Dawn told everyone that she is beginning work on the 2024 LA-DAFR Annual Report. Because of the abbreviated turnaround time between the completion of case review and compiling and analyzing data collected, this year's report will be focusing on a "Recommendation Action Plan" for 2023. This will be the new pattern for the DAFR Annual Report, giving us time to compile and analyze data from the prior year's case review. She informed everyone that she would be in touch in the coming weeks to get their opinions and input for the report. She then asked if anyone had any final comments or thoughts. With none, she thanked the panel and agents for their time, expertise, and dedication.

**The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m. by the DAFR Coordinator, Dawn Joseph.**