

LOUISIANA STATE DOMESTIC ABUSE FATALITY REVIEW (DAFR) PANEL MEETING MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

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

In-person Attendees: Dawn Joseph (DAFR Coordinator), Deon Sumer (DAFR Abstractor), Doug Champlin, Ellen Conner, Kristen Sanderson, Melanie Fields, Ramona Harris, Jill Sessions, Pam Guedry, Anna Watt, Jane Killen, Mariah Wineski Belinda Murphy, Francis Robinson, Jr., Roger Corcoran, Kimberly Chachare, Hope Levins, Maeve Wallace, Sarah Halphen, Dr. Vernoica Gillispie-Bell, Anjell DeGruy, Kristen Falgoust, and Deon Sumer.

Zoom Attendees: Carli Harvey

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 (11 of 20 panel members) was present. The DAFR Coordinator, Abstractor, Panel members, Agents, and PAMR Team introduced themselves. Everyone welcomed Jane Killen, Executive Assistant to Dr. Joseph Kanter, La Dept. Health to the DAFR Panel. They also welcomed Kimberly Chachare, Tri-Region Child Welfare Consultant, Dept. of Children and Family Services, Chief Roger Corcoran, Central Chief of Police, and the Pregnancy Associated Mortality Review (PAMR) Team, Anjell DeGruy, PAMR Coordinator, LDH, BFH, Dr. Veronica Gillispie-Bell, Medical Director, LA-PAMR and Louisiana Perinatal Quality Collaborative (LaPQC), Kristen Falgoust, Region 2 Maternal and Child Health Coordinator, and Carli Harvey, Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Epidemiologist, Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Office of Public Health (OPH), Bureau of Family Health (BFH) to the DAFR meeting.

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 7/19/23. A motion was made by Mariah Wineski to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded by Pam Guidry and approved by the majority.

Business:

The DAFR Coordinator, Dawn Joseph, proposed the following 2024 DAFR Panel meeting dates for the Panel's approval:

- February 21, 2024
- May 15, 2024
- August 21, 2024
- October 30, 2024

A motion was made by Ramona Harris to accept the 2024 meeting schedule. The motion was seconded by Kristen Sanderson and approved by the majority. The DAFR Coordinator then explained that this case review meeting was reserved to review PAM cases due to domestic abuse. The PAMR Coordinator, Anjell DeGruy spoke to everyone about the PAMR explaining,

- LA-PAMR was established by the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Public Health's Bureau of Family Health under the authorization of the Louisiana Commission on Perinatal Care and Prevention of Infant Mortality (Louisiana Perinatal Commission) in order to understand and address maternal mortality in Louisiana.
- A Pregnancy Associated Mortality (PAM) is defined as the death of a woman that occurs during pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy, regardless of the cause. This includes,

- Pregnancy-related deaths- A death during pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy from a pregnancy complication, a chain of events initiated by the pregnancy, or the aggravation of an unrelated condition by the physiologic effects of pregnancy.
- Pregnancy-associated, but not related deaths- A death during pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy from a cause that is not related to pregnancy.
- Pregnancy-associated, but unable to determine relatedness deaths- A pregnancy-associated death where the cause of death is unable to be determined as “pregnancy-related” or “pregnancy-associated, but not related.
- Dr. Gillispie-Bell went on to explain the Maternal Mortality Review Committee Decisions form that is used to guide PAMR recommendations. This form contains the key decisions made for each death reviewed including,
 - Was the death pregnancy-related?
 - What was the cause of death?
 - Was the death preventable?
 - What were the critical contributing factors to the death?
 - What are the committee determinations on circumstances surrounding the death?
 - What was the manner of death?
 - What are the recommendations and actions that address those contributing factors?

Capt. Belinda Murphy then reviewed the Panel’s Guiding Principles and Functions. With no members of the public present, panel members, agents, and the PAMR Team took a brief break and prepared for case review. The Chairperson 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, Agents and PAMR Team reviewed a total of eight pregnancy-associated mortality cases due to domestic abuse (two homicide-suicides and six homicide cases) from 2021. In addition to the questions listed above, 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

Following case review, the DAFR Coordinator and the Violence & Injury Prevention Manager, Kristen Sanderson (LDH, OPH, BFH) spoke to everyone about funding and sustainability of the DAFR, as it’s tasked with finding and securing funding sources to continue its work, per [LA RS 40:2024.7](#). Although the work is currently funded through Sept. 2026, it’s important that the DAFR Panel members and partners be on the lookout for other possible funding opportunities. Panel members agreed to keep this in mind and to assist however they can.

The DAFR Coordinator congratulated everyone for successfully completing one full year of case review. She also thanked Captain Murphy and her team for lending the Panel meeting space, supplies, and equipment for the successful facilitation of all 2023 DAFR Panel meetings. She then asked if anyone had any final comments or thoughts. Melanie Fields of Louisiana District Attorneys Association (LDAA), asked when the annual report would be available. Dawn explained that she was currently in the process of compiling case information and data and that the report would be shared once it has been approved by the necessary BFH staff. Attorney Fields then asked if she could have the total number of cases reviewed and the total number of parishes with cases reviewed. Dawn stated that she would email that information as soon as she could. She asked if anyone else had questions, with none, she again thanked the panel, agents, and abstractor for their time, expertise, and dedication. The Panel also thanked her for the work she’s done to coordinate the Panel and its work. Dawn and Captain Murphy wished everyone a Happy Holidays.

Captain Murphy adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.