

---

---

**Report to  
The Vermont Legislature**

---

---

**Maternal Mortality Review Panel  
Findings and Recommendations**

**In Accordance with Act 35 (2011), Section 2(c)  
*An Act Relating to Insurance Coverage for  
Midwifery Services and Home Births***

**Submitted to:** Senate Committee on Health and Welfare  
House Committee on Health Care  
House Committee on Human Services

**Submitted by:** Harry Chen, M.D.  
Commissioner, Vermont Department of Health

**Prepared by:** Breena Holmes, M.D.  
Director, Division of Maternal and Child Health  
Vermont Department of Health

**Report Date:** January 15, 2014



108 Cherry Street  
PO Box 70  
Burlington, VT 05402  
[healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov)

# Maternal Mortality Review Panel Findings and Recommendations January 15, 2014

## Introduction

In November 2011, the Maternal Mortality Review Panel (MMRP) was established by Act 35. The purpose of the panel is to conduct comprehensive, multidisciplinary reviews of maternal deaths in Vermont for the purposes of identifying factors associated with the deaths and to make recommendations for system changes to improve health care services for women in Vermont.

### MMRP Actions During 2013

**MMRP Panel:** The Panel held its 2013 meeting on November 20, 2013. A list of participating members appears at the end of this report.

**Description of Adverse Events:** During its 2013 meeting, the MMRP reviewed cases of maternal deaths for the preceding 12 months period of October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013. Three pregnancy-associated deaths, deaths that occurred during pregnancy or within a year following the pregnancy irrespective of cause, were identified and reviewed from death certificate records. Two of the deaths occurred out of state, and therefore only limited information was available. The third death occurred in Vermont. The three deaths were pregnancy-associated but not pregnancy related, meaning they were not caused by the pregnancy. None were close in time to the delivery.

The common public health issue that emerged for two, and possibly all 3 deaths was substance abuse. Due to the small number of deaths, listing each cause of death in a public report would not respect the privacy of the affected families. Substance abuse was also a common issue for maternal mortality for the previous year.

**Corrective Action Plans for 2014:** None

**Recommendations for System Change:** Efforts to address substance abuse as a public health issue should be continued. Other system changes may emerge during the rulemaking process pursuant to 18 V.S.A. §1556, or during future investigation work outlined in the rules.

## Status of Rule-Making

Act 35 calls for the Department of Health to adopt rules related to the following:

1. The system for identifying and reporting maternal deaths to the commissioner or designee
2. The form and manner through which the panel may acquire information under Title 18 §1555
3. The protocol to be used in carefully and sensitively contacting a family member of the deceased woman for a discussion of the events surrounding the death, including allowing grieving family members to delay or refuse such an interview
4. Ensuring de-identification of all individuals and facilities involved in the panel's review of cases.

Proposed rules will be filed with the Secretary of State's Office in January 2014. Following adoption of the rules, the panel will have access to more in depth information about Vermont's maternal deaths.

1. In order to perform the duties of Act 35 regarding the review panel, rulemaking must occur.
2. Draft rules are being finalized and will then go out for public comment.
3. After Rule Making is complete, the panel will have access to more in depth information about Vermont's maternal deaths.

## 2013 Panel membership

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Email address</u>	<u>Term</u>
<b>Breana Holmes, MD</b> MCH Division Director	Dept of Health	<a href="mailto:Breana.holmes@state.vt.us">Breana.holmes@state.vt.us</a>	3
<b>Charles Mercier, MD</b> Neonatologist	Fletcher Allen Health Care	<a href="mailto:charles.mercier@uvm.edu">charles.mercier@uvm.edu</a>	2
<b>Eleanor Capeless, MD</b> Professor, Dept of OB/GYN & Reproductive Sciences	Fletcher Allen Health Care	<a href="mailto:Eleanor.capeless@uvm.edu">Eleanor.capeless@uvm.edu</a>	3
<b>Ellie Kenworthy</b>	Member of the public	<a href="mailto:ekenworthy4@comcast.net">ekenworthy4@comcast.net</a>	3
<b>James Malcolm, MD</b> Chief of Obstetrics	Addison Associates in OB/GYN	<a href="mailto:jmalcolm@portermedical.org">jmalcolm@portermedical.org</a>	4
<b>Janet Kaplan, LM</b> Licensed Midwife Certified Nurse-Midwife and APRN	Timbrel Farmstead Home Midwifery	<a href="mailto:jkmidwyfe@gmail.com">jkmidwyfe@gmail.com</a>	3
<b>Katherine Bramhall, LM</b> Licensed midwife	Gentle Landing Midwifery	<a href="mailto:Katherine@gentlelanding.com">Katherine@gentlelanding.com</a>	3
<b>Marjorie Meyer, MD</b> Associate Professor, Dept of OBGYN & Reproductive Sciences	Fletcher Allen Health Care	<a href="mailto:majorie.meyer@uvm.edu">majorie.meyer@uvm.edu</a>	3
<b>Martha Redpath, MSN</b> Certified Nurse-Midwife and APRN	Tapestry Midwifery	<a href="mailto:mredpath@portermedical.org">mredpath@portermedical.org</a>	4
<b>Peggy Brozicevic</b> Epidemiologist	Dept of Health	<a href="mailto:peggy.brozicevic@state.vt.us">peggy.brozicevic@state.vt.us</a>	3
<b>Stacey Sigmon, PhD</b> Associate Professor Community Mental Health	UVM Dept of Psychiatry	<a href="mailto:stacey.sigmon@uvm.edu">stacey.sigmon@uvm.edu</a>	3
<b>Steven Shapiro, MD</b> Chief Medical Examiner	Dept of Health	<a href="mailto:steven.shapiro@state.vt.us">steven.shapiro@state.vt.us</a>	2