
**Report to
The Vermont Legislature**

Status Report on Maternal Mortality Review Panel

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

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

Submitted by: Harry Chen, MD
Commissioner of Health

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Report Date: January 4, 2016



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Status Report on Maternal Mortality Review Panel
Act 35, 18 V.S.A. § 1552(a)
January 2016

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

MMRP Actions during 2015

MMRP Panel: The panel held its 2015 meeting on November 24, 2015. A list of participating members appears at the end of this report.

Description of Adverse Events: During the 2015 meeting, the MMRP reviewed 2 cases of maternal deaths during the preceding 12 month period of October 1, 2014- September 30, 2015.

- 1) Case #1 was a 38 year-old women at 38 5/7th weeks gestation with well-established prenatal care who was found dead at home. Autopsy revealed an enlarged heart and the cause of death was certified by the medical examiner as Cardiac Disease of Uncertain Etiology and the manner of death as Natural. The panel discussed the medical causes of enlarged heart in pregnancy. No public health issues were identified.
- 2) Case #2 was a 31 year-old woman, with a history of depression and substance abuse, found dead at home. She was described as being very ill the day of death and night prior, with a two day history of chest congestion, cough and subjective fever. According to woman's boyfriend, she had miscarried an early gestation fetus approximately 20 hours prior to death. Autopsy confirmed an approximately 10

week fetus. Patient had not received obstetrical care and may not have known she was pregnant. Other factors included a history of incarceration with current placement in probation system and a history of substance abuse.

Corrective Action Plans for 2014: None

Recommendations for System Change:

The group discussed several systems issues related to Case #2. The following observations were made:

- 1) The respiratory illness which resulted in this woman's death was treatable if she had been willing/able to access primary care.
- 2) Substance use contributed to severity of her illness.
- 3) Patient was violating the terms of her parole by using heroin, which contributed to her inability to access health care for her illness (and possibly her pregnancy).
- 4) Patient had other children in DCF custody so attention needs to be paid to improving health access for them.
- 5) Women in the correction system should receive help to access primary care, including enrollment in health insurance when possible Breena Holmes will set up a meeting with Department of Corrections.
- 6) Efforts to connect women using substances to system of care for treatment should be continued.

2015 Panel membership:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Email address</u>
Present at November 24, 2015 meeting		
Breena Holmes, MD MCH Division Director	Dept of Health	Breena.holmes@vermont.gov
Charles Mercier, MD Neonatologist	UVM Medical Center	charles.mercier@uvm.edu
Eleanor Capeless, MD Professor, Dept of OB/GYN & Reproductive Sciences	UVM Medical Center	Eleanor.capeless@uvm.edu
Martha Redpath, MSN Certified Nurse-Midwife and APRN	Tapestry Midwifery	mredpath@portermedical.org
Elizabeth Bundock, MD, PhD Deputy Chief Medical Examiner	Dept of Health	Elizabeth.bundock@vermont.gov
Adrienne Woike, NP Perinatal Quality Improvement Manager	VT Child Health Improvement	adrienne.woike@uvm.edu
Katherine Bramhall, LM Licensed midwife	Gentle Landing Midwifery	Katherine@gentlelanding.com
Peggy Brozicevic Epidemiologist	Dept of Health	peggy.brozicevic@vermont.gov
Sarah Heil, PhD Associate Professor Psychiatry and Psychology	UVM Dept of Psychiatry	sarah.heil@uvm.edu

Absent from November 24, 2015 meeting

Marjorie Meyer, MD Associate Professor, Dept of OBGYN & Reproductive Sciences	Fletcher Allen Health Care	majorie.meyer@uvm.edu
Ellie Kenworthy	Member of the public	ekenworthy4@comcast.net
Steven Shapiro, MD Chief Medical Examiner	Dept of Health	steven.shapiro@state.vt.us
Janet Kaplan, LM Licensed Midwife Certified Nurse-Midwife and APRN	Timbrel Farmstead Home Midwifery	jkmidwyfe@gmail.com
James Malcolm, MD Chief of Obstetrics	Addison Associates in OB/GYN	jmalcolm@portermedical.org