

VERMONT LEGAL AID

Long Term Care Ombudsman Project

S.40

February 26, 2016

The concept of a Vulnerable Adult Fatality Review Team is not unique to Vermont. Numerous states, counties and cities have established similar Teams.

I would like to focus briefly on the success of Maine's Elder Death Analysis Review Team (MEDART). MEDART reviews the deaths of older victims and vulnerable adults. MEDART was created in 2003 when Maine was selected by the American Bar Association, Commission on Law and Aging (ABA) as one of four sites to pilot promising practices in fatality review teams.

Ricker Hamilton was the Protective Program Administrator, Bureau of Elder Adult Services when he chaired the first MEDART in 2003. The ABA published a Replication Manual summarizing the activities of the pilot sites. In 2003, in his introduction to the Manual section on the MEDART, Mr. Hamilton said, "the MEDART had made tremendous strides in just one year." He acknowledged that "[W]hile it is too early to track changes affected by the work of the MEDART, it is the belief of the membership that such changes will effect legislation, policy, education and best practices. Most important, the Maine Elder Death Analysis Review Team believes its work will affect the quality of life for seniors throughout Maine."

I spoke with Mr. Hamilton last year when this committee first considered S.40. He was then the Deputy Commissioner of Programs, including Aging and Disability Services. the MEDART had been conducting fatality reviews for over 12 years. Mr. Hamilton said that the MEDART had lived up to his expectations. He explained that the MEDART continues to play an important role in fostering systemic change. Looking back those 12 years, he said that he believes that creating the MEDART was the most important thing he accomplished as Protective Program Administrator.

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Majoros, Long Term Care Ombudsman
jmajoros@vtlegalaid.org 802.383.2227