



Kentucky Multidisciplinary Commission on Child Sexual Abuse

Kentucky Office of the Attorney General
Regular Meeting
Video Teleconferencing
December 10, 2024
12:00 p.m. EST
Minutes

I. Roll Call and Introductions

The Meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Caroline Ruschell, at 12:02 p.m.

Roll Call

Commission Members Present:

Caroline Ruschell, Commission Chair, Children's Advocacy Centers of Kentucky

Jessica Jones, Department for Community Based Services

Captain Jeremy W. Smith, Department of Kentucky State Police (designee for the
Commissioner)

Melanie Taylor, Child Protection Branch, Department for Community Based Services
(designee for the Commissioner)

Deborah Sauber, Kentucky Department of Education, Division of Student Success (proxy for
Christina Weeter, designee for the Commissioner)

Susan Rhema, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, University of Louisville

Erica Paske, Office of the Attorney General, Office of Victims Advocacy

Dolores Smith, Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Family and Juvenile Services

Rob Sanders, Commonwealth's Attorney, 16th Judicial Circuit

Ramsey Dallam, Office of the Attorney General, Special Prosecutions

Shericka Smith, Fayette County Public Schools, Department of Student Support Services

Sergeant Betsy Brushway, Lexington Police Department, Crimes Against Children Unit

Jacqueline Sugarman, Medical Director for Children's Advocacy Centers of Kentucky
(joined at 12:19 p.m.)

Guests Present:

Laura Kretzer, Children's Advocacy Centers of Kentucky

Jackie Kuryla, Children's Advocacy Centers of Kentucky

Denise Durbin, Kentucky Office of the Attorney General, Special Counsel

II. Approval of the October 8, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Jones made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Dallam seconded the motion. The motion to approve the October 8, 2024, minutes was unanimous. Doctor Sugarman was not present for the voting.

III. Review and Discuss Analysis of Survey Results from Local Multidisciplinary Teams Regarding the Review of Fatal and Near Fatal Child Physical Abuse Cases

Prior to the meeting, the Commission received a revised version of the MDT Case Review and Physical Abuse Fatality/Near Fatality Feasibility Analysis. The Analysis was prepared in response to recommendations from the Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel and revised in response to suggestions from the Commission during the October 8, 2024, meeting.

Ms. Kretzer presented an overview of the revised Analysis. The revised Analysis identifies next steps for the Commission as it continues to examine the feasibility of requiring multidisciplinary teams to review all fatal or near fatal child physical abuse investigations.

IV. Review and Discuss Response to Recommendations Appearing in the 2023 Annual Report of the Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel

Ms. Durbin, Special Counsel with the Kentucky Office of the Attorney General (“OAG”), joined the meeting to speak with the Commission about the Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel’s recommendations. She explained that the Panel recommended the OAG work with the Commission to determine the feasibility of requesting statutory changes that would require multidisciplinary teams to review all fatal or near fatal child physical abuse investigations. Ms. Durbin advised the Commission that the OAG is approaching the recommendation as an entity distinct from the Commission and recognizes the Commission’s expertise on multidisciplinary teams. She told the Commission that she and Ms. Ruschell have spoken regarding the positions of both entities relative to the recommendation, and the OAG is supportive of the steps taken by the Commission to address the Panel’s recommendation. Ms. Durbin was present to continue the dialogue with the Commission regarding possible statutory changes.

Ms. Ruschell acknowledged the collaborative efforts between the OAG and the Commission, and the steps taken to evaluate the recommendation thoughtfully and thoroughly. She expressed the Commission’s position that the goal sought through the recommendation could potentially be accomplished through the Commission’s review and updating of the MDT model protocol. The Commission could consider adding language requiring the review of fatal and near fatal physical abuse cases, which might eliminate the need for a statutory change. Additional evaluation is needed, and the Commission will continue identifying and examining issues implicated by the recommendation.

V. Review and Approval of Local MDT Protocols

The Commission considered the local multidisciplinary team protocols for the following counties:

- Boyd
- Marion & Washington

Each protocol contains the required language from the model protocol template without modifications or additions and provides the appropriate signatures, agency affiliations, and roles served for all team members on the multidisciplinary team. Ms. Ruschell made a motion to approve the protocols as presented. Mr. Sanders seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Review of Open Records Requests

No open record requests were received since the Commission's last meeting.

VII. Discuss Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024

Ms. Kretzer presented a draft of the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024. The draft will be circulated to the Commission for feedback. Commission members were encouraged to provide information on projects or trainings that occurred within their agencies for inclusion in the report. A revised draft will be presented for approval during the February meeting.

VIII. Operational Matters

Commission members will have an opportunity to vote for one of four proposed logos prior to the February meeting. The proposed logos will be sent to Commission members after the meeting. The Committee adopted a meeting schedule for 2025. Mr. Sanders nominated Ms. Ruschell to serve as chairperson. Ms. Dolores Smith seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Ruschell will continue serving as chair for the Commission.

IX. Partner Updates

The Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Family and Juvenile Services provided three in-person trainings for court-appointed counsel handling dependency, neglect, and abuse cases. These trainings included sections addressing trauma and a panel of lived experts of former foster youth and parents involved in the child welfare system who shared their perspectives.

X. Adjournment

Ms. Ruschell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sanders seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

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