

**COMMITTEE TO REVIEW SUICIDE FATALITIES
MINUTES
September 28, 2015
9:00 a.m.**

Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH)
Child Family and Community Wellness (CFCW)
Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP)
445 Apple Street, Suite 104
Reno, NV 89502

Toll-Free Dial Number
(866) 434-5269
Conference Code
7501044

DPBH-CFCW
Office of Suicide Prevention
3811 W. Charleston Blvd., Ste. 210
Las Vegas, NV 89102

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELEPHONE
CONFERENCE**

Mike Bernstein, M. Ed. (Southern Nevada Health
District)
Dr. Lesley Dickson (Nevada Psychiatric
Association)
John Fudenberg, Clark County Coroner
Joanne Libertelli (Spring Mountain Treatment
Center)
Marlyn Scholl, LCSW, Veterans Administration
Sierra Nevada Health Care System, Reno
Senator Debbie Smith (District 13 – Sparks)

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT
Heather Shoop (WestCare)

DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAFF PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS

Richard Egan, Suicide Prevention Training and Outreach Facilitator, DPBH-CFCW-OSP

DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAFF PRESENT IN RENO

Misty Allen, State Suicide Prevention Coordinator, DPBH-CFCW-OSP
Angela Friedman, Administrative Assistant, DPBH-CFCW-OSP

OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELEPHONE CONFERENCE

Sergeant John Harney, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Julieta Mendoza, Tribal Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, Director's Office

Misty Allen called the meeting of the Committee to Review Suicide Fatalities (CRSF) to order at 9:00 a.m. The meeting was properly posted at the locations listed on the agenda in accordance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law (OML).

1. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Attendees made their introductions by phone and Ms. Allen determined a quorum of the Committee to Review Suicide Fatalities was present.

2. **VOTE TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE CLOSED AND OPEN MEETINGS HELD ON JUNE 19, 2015**
No corrections, deletions or additions were made to the open session of the June 19, 2015 minutes as presented.

MISTY ALLEN ENTERTAINED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION OF THE JUNE 19, 2015 MEETING. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY MIKE BERNSTEIN. JOANNE LIBERTELLI SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT PUBLIC COMMENT.

Lesley Dickson noted corrections needed relating to the listing of participants in the closed meeting minutes.

MISTY ALLEN ENTERTAINED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE CLOSED SESSION OF THE JUNE 19, 2015 MEETING WITH THE CORRECTIONS AS NOTED. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY SENATOR DEBBIE SMITH. MIKE BERNSTEIN SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT PUBLIC COMMENT.

3. **UPDATE ON AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION (VA) AND THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW SUICIDE FATALITIES (CRSF)**

Marlyn Scholl noted the MOU was reviewed by her supervisor and the VA's Chief of Mental Health. It is moving forward and is currently with legal counsel. Ms. Scholl has not heard concerns and will follow up with her supervisor and Chief of Mental Health regarding the delay.

Ms. Allen asked for public comment.

John Fudenberg was interested in the MOU as he has had working discussions with the VA. Ms. Scholl explained as the Suicide Behavior Specialist for the main VA hospital in Reno her work involves the collection of comprehensive suicide behavior autopsy data. The purpose of the MOU is to request the VA share its data with the Committee to enhance discussion gleaned from the police and coroner's reports. Richard Egan gave further reason for the MOU and noted it will be shared with the VA hospital in the southern area.

Mr. Fudenberg said he has been working with the VA on the state level. He stated about 90% of the coroners and state medical examiners across the country are not held to list on death certificates the reasons for suicide which requires a psychological autopsy. Veteran families are told in order to collect decedent benefits Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) must be listed on the death certificate. He has spoken with higher level staff at the local VA and Caleb Cage, Veterans Policy Analyst at the Governor's Office. Mr. Fudenberg is trying to set up a meeting in December to talk to someone at the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC to discuss this issue. Ms. Scholl and Mr. Fudenberg will share information and try to determine whether the Veterans Medical Center or the Veterans Benefits Association is telling families the death certificates need to show PTSD as the reason for suicide. Dr. Dickson agreed one cannot determine which mental illness caused the suicide. Mr. Egan noted an instance in which financial benefits were given to a family when a veteran father with PTSD died by suicide. Mr. Fudenberg confirmed with two VA staff a benefit exists related to PTSD. Ms. Scholl will inquire with the VA National Cemeteries regarding this issue. Ms. Allen noted the replacement for Caleb Cage is Cesar Melgarejo.

Ms. Allen asked for public comment. None was heard.

4. **UPDATE ON AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR THE TWO VACANT COMMITTEE POSITIONS FOR APPOINTMENT BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

This agenda item was held to after Agenda Item # 5

5. **REVIEW AND APPROVE THE DRAFT OF THE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Ms. Allen shared the report she is working on at this time consists of only bullet points from the minutes of the four teleconferenced meetings and the two face to face meetings over the last year. Although it was suggested, she felt very uncomfortable sharing the bullet points related to the individual cases. The recommendations are from discussions of the 15 cases, are related to pharmacies and medications, and follow up with families and emergency personnel after discharge. Research and rationale for the recommendations still need to be added to the report.

John Harney announced he joined the teleconference.

Mr. Fudenberg will work with Ms. Scholl to ensure reports of veterans suicide deaths are sent from Clark and Washoe Counties to the VA. The two county offices use the same case management software and have the same ability to send automatic reports via email. Mr. Egan suggested a directive would be best to support reporting veteran deaths. He and Ms. Scholl discussed expanding the use of the suicide prevention work group distribution email list to include decedent affairs. Mr. Fudenberg suggested using strong language in the recommendation such as "ensure the Coroner's Office notifies the VA." Mike Bernstein asked if legislation would be appropriate for this recommendation. Mr. Fudenberg did not think it was necessary, but could be helpful. Ms. Scholl and Mr. Fudenberg discussed the need to reach out to rural county sheriff's offices. Mr. Fudenberg discussed the difference between coroners, ex-officio coroners, and medical examiners. A non-medical examiner coroner determining cause of death on a suicide is against national standards. Mr. Fudenberg suggested statute be written stating all cases are suspected to be suicides be referred to a medical examiner. Currently examiners are only in Washoe and Clark counties. Mr. Fudenberg will work with Ms. Allen to write the recommendation. Mr. Fudenberg, Ms. Allen, Ms. Scholl, and Mr. Egan discussed the term veteran and under what circumstances some military personnel do not consider themselves veterans. Mr. Egan suggested using the term "veterans/military" to describe anyone who has participated in the armed forces. Ms. Scholl suggested education to those who complete the forms used for data collection.

Mr. Fudenberg offered support in outreach to mortuaries. His office has contracts with the five largest mortuaries in Clark County and can include in the contract or strongly recommend a task to the mortuaries. Mr. Egan discussed the mortuaries need to know if the death is by suicide in order to give support to the families.

Dr. Dickson discussed an upcoming University of Nevada, Las Vegas conference regarding Medicaid and provider services. The School of Social Work and School of Medicine are resigning to the idea of providing outpatient clinics. Dr. Dickson and Ms. Libertelli agreed follow up with Legal 2000 patients is very difficult because of the lack of services. HPN and Amerigroup are trying to set up wraparound services. Dr. Dickson noted the lack of increase of state provided services in the last budget, and the decrease in services in Southern Nevada. Ms. Allen said the review of cases can support recommendations toward policy and funding changes. Dr. Dickson and Ms. Allen will work to create

a strong recommendation for mental health and wrap around services. Mr. Bernstein supported continuing to make the recommendation for increase in state services. Dr. Dickson would like it to be the number one recommendation.

Mr. Fudenberg had to leave the meeting.

Ms. Allen questioned the need to include the observations related to the individual cases reviewed. Mr. Bernstein expressed concern with putting any identifying information on paper. Dr. Dickson noted the report should be concise.

Dr. Dickson suggested a recommendation related to greater effort in dealing with substance abuse. Ms. Allen discussed the Substance Use Disorder Virtual Implementation Academy which focused on service member, veteran and family substance use disorder. One main focus is opioid and prescription drug use. Overdose deaths from drug use is equal to suicide death in Nevada. Mr. Bernstein stated recommendations, from a report regarding opioid abuse and heroin overdose related to the bill passed to establish policy, were going to be coming out of the Governor's Office in the fall. Ms. Allen is pulling information from the report which Mr. Bernstein noted.

Ms. Libertelli suggested the report include bullet points of common denominators in the cases reviewed. Ms. Allen will add the risk and protective factors to the report.

Ms. Allen noted other committees are noting in their reports oversight teams to carry out and enforce the recommendations. The members discussed how determining oversight might be established through implementation and eventually through legislation.

Ms. Allen asked for public comment. None was heard.

4. UPDATE ON AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR THE TWO VACANT COMMITTEE POSITIONS FOR APPOINTMENT BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. Egan introduced Sergeant John Harney as the suggested replacement to the open law enforcement representative. Sergeant Harney introduced himself. Recommendation paperwork has been sent to the Department of Health and Human Services Director's Office for approval.

Ms. Allen announced Dr. Melissa Piasecki resigned at the end of her term as the member representing the organization of expertise in suicide prevention. Ms. Allen will reach out to the universities for recommendation for the vacant position. The Native American Tribes representative is also vacant.

Dr. Dickson asked what kind of professional experience is needed to fill Dr. Piasecki's position. Ms. Allen reported Dr. Piasecki recommended Erin Grinshteyn, PhD from the School of Public Health, University of Nevada, Reno be the replacement. Ms. Allen will send Dr. Grinshteyn's credentials to Dr. Dickson.

Ms. Allen asked for public comment. None was heard.

6. **DISCUSS AND RECOMMEND NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS AND DATE**

Dr. Dickson invited members to the annual psychiatric conference in February in which three lectures will be given related to suicide. Ms. Allen will send the agenda for the October Suicide Prevention Conference to distribute to encourage participation.

The committee suggested November 16, 2015 at 9 a.m. for a teleconference, and Friday, January 22, 2015 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for a face to face case review meeting in Las Vegas. Mr. Egan announced 25 new cases from 2013 with 25% outside of Clark County, and cases from previous meetings now have additional information will be reviewed. Mr. Egan will be pulling data from the data collection tool and create a report.

Ms. Allen asked for public comment. None was heard.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Allen asked for public comment. None was heard.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m.