

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW SUICIDE FATALITIES
DRAFT OPEN MEETING MINUTES
August 24, 2020
10:15 AM

MEETING LOCATIONS:

This meeting was held via teleconference and videoconference only. Pursuant to Governor Sisolak's March 22, 2020, Declaration of Emergency Directive 006 which was extended by Directive 029, the requirement contained in NRS 241.023(1)(b) that there be a physical location is suspended in order to mitigate the possible exposure or transmission of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Accordingly, all members of the public were encouraged to participate by using the teleconference number or Teams Meeting link provided in the agenda.

VIDEOCONFERENCE:

TEAMS Meeting Log-In:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_Zjg4MzllNzktZDU0Mi00ZTI1LTk2NmYtNThjNzFIMjQ0ZTYx%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e4a340e6-b89e-4e68-8eaa-1544d2703980%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%229f241f78-d35a-4174-b239-6ac2ac87e8c9%22%7d

TELECONFERENCE:

Dial-In Toll-free Number 1-866-434-5269

Participants Code# 7501044

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Mike Bernstein, M. Ed., Nevada Coalition for Suicide Prevention, Co-Chair

Marlyn Scholl, LCSW, Veterans Health Administration, Sierra Nevada Health Care System, Reno, Co-Chair

Lesley Dickson, MD, Nevada Psychiatric Association

Jamie Elizabeth Ross, Executive Director, PACT Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Communities

Terry Kerns, Substance Abuse Law Enforcement Coordinator, Nevada Attorney General's Office

Sheila L. Leslie, MA, Retired, Washoe County Social Services, Consultant, Sagepine Strategies

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Fran Maldonado, Tribal Liaison, Division of Child and Family Services

DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAFF PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Misty Vaughan Allen, Nevada Statewide Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), Bureau of Child Family and Community Wellness (BCFCW), Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP)

Richard Egan, Training and Outreach Facilitator, DPBH-BCFCW-OSP

Angela Friedman, Administrative Assistant IV, DPBH-BCFCW-OSP

OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Sharon Benson, Senior Deputy Attorney General, NV Attorney General's Office

OTHERS PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Laura Knight, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner and Coroner, Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office (WCRMEO)

Allison Zednicek, CEO, Desert Parkway Behavioral Health Hospital, Former CEO for West Hills Hospital
Valerie Padovani, Government Affairs Associate, J.K. Belz and Associates

Marlyn Scholl called the meeting of the Committee to Review Suicide Fatalities (CRSF) to order at 10:15 AM. Technical difficulties related to the teleconference line occurred. Although, the videoconference was working. The meeting started late to accommodate those who may have wished to join online. 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

All attendees, including members, introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Marlyn Scholl asked for public comment. None was heard.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 2, 2020 OPEN AND CLOSED MEETING MINUTES. MARLYN SCHOLL ENTERTAINED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE OPEN AND CLOSED SESSION MINUTES OF THE MARCH 2, 2020 MEETING. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY LESLEY DICKSON. MIKE BERNSTEIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT PUBLIC COMMENT.

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

4. DISCUSS, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

Misty Allen proposed the next report cross-reference suicides, crisis calls, and disasters, such as COVID-19 and the October 1st tragedy. Richard Egan gave background on the purpose and development of the suggestion. Ms. Allen also suggested the report include conversation regarding the Humboldt County meeting, and rural counties' referrals of suicides to the larger county forensic medical examiners.

Lesley Dickson noted the importance of focus on economic stress and suicides.

Mr. Egan mentioned the effects on youth suicide because of COVID-19 restrictions. Ms. Allen also suggested highlighting the current recommendations as they relate to COVID-19.

Dr. Dickson discussed the article from the Journal of the American Medical Association, "Association of Timely Outpatient Mental Health Services for Youths After Psychiatric Hospitalization with Risk of Death by Suicide." Dr. Dickson questioned the quality and availability of adolescent care in the community.

Mike Bernstein supported including data related to COVID-19 challenges.

Ms. Allen noted the Medical Examiners' offices have been fantastic in their support of the Committee. Ms. Allen and Laura Knight noted suicide rates related to elder males and firearms. Mr. Egan predicted 2020 Clark County suicides and their age distribution.

Mr. Egan and Ms. Allen discussed the crisis call data being collected to determine the extent to which the Route 91 event and COVID-19 contribute to call volume, and to research if any of the calls were related to suicide.

Mr. Bernstein was interested in research on attempts or suicides related to economic stress and contacts made to crisis lines or behavioral health professionals.

Marlyn Scholl questioned the ability to interview family members. Mr. Egan discussed psychological autopsies and gave caution when approaching families. Dr. Knight responded the interview would need to be very specific, granular and not time consuming for all involved. She commented on the use of the suicide assessment tool.

Ms. Scholl noted having members of the smaller communities directly involved in discussion was helpful to the review. Ms. Allen suggested combining recommendations from the Nye County and the Humboldt County reports for submission to the Director. Ms. Scholl described her follow up with Sharon Wehrly, Humboldt County Sheriff. Mr. Egan noted Sheriff Wehrly has assigned one of her staff to become an instructor to train the Sheriff's Office and the community on Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

5. DISCUSS, MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS, AND APPROVE THE METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE NEXT CLOSED MEETING AND DISTRIBUTION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REGARDING DECEDENTS WHILE CONSIDERING THE SAFETY RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE DUE TO COVID-19.

Richard Egan explained the concerns regarding logistics of the next closed meeting. Angela Friedman shared concerns with meeting in person. She noted January is the usual date of the winter meeting. Jamie Ross said the PACT Coalition may have a room to accommodate the group but would rather plan on the meeting being virtual. Marlyn Scholl questioned how to ensure privacy, and expressed concerns with travel. Members discussed the confidentiality of using possible virtual meeting platforms, and the need to research and ensure the security. Misty Allen proposed polling the members for Tuesday and Friday dates in January.

6. DISCUSS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPOINTMENTS TO FILL THE THREE VACANT COMMITTEE MEMBER POSITIONS: A MEMBER TO REPRESENT LAW ENFORCEMENT, A MEMBER TO REPRESENT MENTAL HEALTH AGENCIES, AND A COUNTY CORONER.

Richard Egan discussed Brett Harding, Assistant Coroner for Clark County, Christopher Kennedy, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and Allison Zednicsek, CEO of Desert Parkway Behavioral Health were suggestions to fulfill the positions. Misty Allen suggested Laura Knight apply for the coroner position and have both coroner positions available to represent during the meetings. Sharon Benson explained the statute states the minimum number of members, but anyone determined helpful to the committee may attend the meeting. She will need to look at the statute to see if new attendees can be added as voting members. Lesley Dickson suggested a bill draft to revise the statute. Ms. Allen noted more rural representation would be helpful to the Committee. Marlyn Scholl suggested the Mobile Outreach Safety Team (MOST) could add insight. She also noted rural communities have support staff like MOST. Ms. Allen noted including a person representing Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC).

Jamie Ross suggested looking to fill the law enforcement representative position with someone from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Behavioral Health Unit. She gave information on what she knows of the program and its development.

Mr. Egan suggested adding committee appointed undesignated positions to supplement discussion from other fields. Ms. Allen said the rural representation should be designated. Dr. Dickson noted the difficulty of commitment of the rural communities. Ms. Ross suggested listing 10-15 different criteria from which to pull rather than specifying the rural community members. Ms. Allen will discuss options for at-large positions with Ms. Benson to add language to the Committee's Bylaws. Ms. Benson recommended another meeting to include a specific agenda item discussing changes related to non-voting members. The Director will need to approve the changes. Dr. Dickson asked and Ms. Allen explained a Bill Draft Request (BDR) would not be necessary to add additional members unless the Committee desired a change to the NRS.

7. DISCUSS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING WASHOE COUNTY AND CLARK COUNTY CORONER/MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICES INVOLVEMENT WITH SUICIDES THROUGHOUT NEVADA.

Richard Egan explained during collection of data for upcoming case reviews, it was apparent rural communities were not referring suicides to the Clark and Washoe County Coroner's offices. Misty Allen confirmed Winnemucca law enforcement explained they did not refer if the person died by firearm or hanging. Mr. Egan shared virtually Laura Knight's report on county referrals.

Dr. Knight explained it is at the discretion of the counties to refer. She noted the instances of non-referrals. She clarified a toxicology report cannot be used as a cause of death. She explained the law requiring all drug related deaths be sent for examination to a forensic pathologist and the reason for the law. She suggested the Committee support a BDR to require the smaller counties refer to the larger counties. She discussed the possible inaccuracies due to no referrals and lack of use of the suicide assessment tool (SAT). She discussed the CDC's National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) into which the Clark County and Washoe County Coroners' offices submit data for all of Nevada. She explained the data is not complete because some smaller counties are not cooperating or are providing minimal data.

Mr. Egan and Dr. Knight discussed Nevada's two major coroner's offices unified data collection system versus other states' data collection systems. Dr. Knight noted a need for a State Medical Examiner System to promote universal data collection methods but noted funding and geographic issues. Dr. Knight said she has seen more SATs used but not consistently. Ms. Allen noted face to face meetings in the rural areas which build relationships is helping to collect better data.

Mr. Egan noted deadlines are approaching for BDR submissions. Lesley Dickson noted the possibility of approaching the Health and Human Services Director to assign a BDR. Jamie Ross expressed a fiscal note attached to a BDR will not pass in the upcoming session but might pass in 2023. Dr. Knight noted requiring other counties to refer to Washoe County would have a fiscal impact. Ms. Allen said continuing to build relationships would be best. Marlyn Scholl responded had she not developed relationships with the rural counties she

may have missed a few veteran suicide cases which were not reported to Washoe County.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Allen gave information on the Nevada Coalition for Suicide Prevention's Annual Walk which will be virtual.

Laura Knight discussed the Nevada Physician's Wellness Program which was resolved last year to be a statewide program. Lesley Dickson suggested placing the program information in the Medical Board Newsletter since it was not well marketed in southern Nevada.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

DRAFT