

State Child Fatality Review Team (SCFRT) Committee

Friday, November 8, 2024

10:00 a.m.

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Virtual: Teams Meeting Platform

In Person Meeting Site: Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

Robert D. Moreton Building, Room M-100, First Floor

1100 49th Street, Austin, Texas 78756

Agenda Item 1: Call to Order, Roll Call, and Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Kenton Murthy, Chair, called the SCFRT Committee meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Dr. Murthy welcomed committee members, staff, and members of the public in attendance.

Francesca Kupper, Advisory Committee Coordination Office, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) read the logistical announcements and stated the meeting was being conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Ms. Kupper conducted the member roll call and announced the presence of quorum.

Table 1: SCFRT Committee member attendance at the November 8, 2024, meeting.

Member name	Attended	Member name	Attended
Dr. Simi Abraham	Y	Dr. Natalie Kissoon	Y
Ms. Lindsey Anzaldua	Y	Ms. Letty Martinez	Y
Chief Michael Baldwin	Y	Ms. LaViza Matthews	Y
Dr. Tara Das	Y	Dr. Kenton Murthy, Chair	Y
Judge Joanne Garcia Flores	Y	Ms. Angelica Powers	Y
Sheriff Christopher Forbis	N	Dr. Jennifer Ross	Y
Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney	Y	Ms. Amy Smith	Y

Member name	Attended	Member name	Attended
Dr. Sanjuanita Garza-Cox	Y	Dr. Lawrence Thompson, Jr.	Y
Katia Gonzalez	Y	Dr. Davlyn Tillman	Y
Chief Michael Hayes, Vice Chair	Y	Dr. Jeannine Von Stultz	N
Sergeant Ryan Howard	Y	The Honorable State Representative Gene Wu	Y
Ms. Kerrie Judice	Y		

Agenda Item 2: Consideration of August 9, 2024, Draft Meeting Minutes

Dr. Murthy referred members to the draft minutes emailed by the program liaison and called for any edits. Hearing none, Dr. Murthy called for a motion to approve the August 9, 2024, meeting minutes.

Motion: Dr. Lawrence Thompson, Jr. moved to approve the August 9, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Lori Gabbert Charney seconded the motion. Following a roll call vote, the motion passed by a majority vote with 19 yeas (Abraham, Anzaldua, Baldwin, Gabbert Charney, Garcia Flores, Garza-Cox, Gonzalez, Hayes, Howard, Judice, Kissoon, Martinez, Matthews, Murthy, Powers, Ross, Smith, Thompson, Tillman), 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

Agenda Item 3: Member Appreciation and Certificates

Dr. Murthy voiced appreciation to members and provided Certificates of Appreciation to members whose term concluded at this meeting. (Powers, Garza-Cox, Smith, Judice, Abraham.) Chief Hayes recognized Dr. Murthy as well.

Agenda Item 4: Consideration of Open Committee Member Positions (Deferred until Quorum)

Dr. Murthy announced this agenda item will provide the six permanent SCFRT members the opportunity to consider and vote on the open SCFRT Committee positions. Ms. Kupper announced the permanent committee members: Dr. Tara Das, Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney, Ms. Letty Martinez and The Honorable State

Representative Gene Wu and noted that the Governor's representative and Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) representative positions are currently vacant. Ms. Kupper provided process and bylaw items. Ms. Sarah Blezinger (DSHS), informed committee members there were 15 applications for 8 open committee member positions.

Ms. Kupper announced two applicants applied for multiple positions and the first position each applicant is selected for makes them ineligible for the other positions they applied for. Ms. Kupper noted in the case of a tie vote, a second vote will be held. If the second vote results in a tie, a coin toss will determine which applicant will fill the position.

Ms. Kupper announced the candidate for the Criminal Prosecutor position is Ms. Donna Hansen and called on each of the permanent members to record their individual vote for the Criminal Prosecutor member position:

Dr. Tara Das voted for Ms. Donna Hansen.

Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney voted for Ms. Donna Hansen.

Ms. Letty Martinez voted for Ms. Donna Hansen.

The Honorable State Representative Gene Wu voted for Ms. Donna Hansen.

Ms. Kupper noted four votes approving the selection of Ms. Donna Hansen to the open SCFRT Criminal Prosecutor member position and announced Ms. Donna Hansen was selected to fill the open Criminal Prosecutor member position.

Ms. Kupper announced the candidate for the Police Chief position is Chief Onesimo Lopez and called on each of the permanent members to record their individual vote for the Police Chief member position:

Dr. Tara Das voted for Chief Onesimo Lopez.

Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney voted for Chief Onesimo Lopez.

Ms. Letty Martinez voted for Chief Onesimo Lopez.

The Honorable State Representative Gene Wu voted for Chief Onesimo Lopez.

Ms. Kupper noted four votes approving the selection of Chief Onesimo Lopez to the open SCFRT Police Chief member position and announced Chief Onesimo Lopez was selected to fill the open Police Chief member position.

Ms. Kupper announced the candidates for the Public Health Professional position are Ms. Lauren Butschek-Neisler and Dr. Kimberly Kay-Lopez and called on each of the permanent members to record their individual vote for the Public Health Professional member position:

Dr. Tara Das voted for Ms. Lauren Butschek-Neisler.

Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney voted for Ms. Lauren Butschek-Neisler.

Ms. Letty Martinez voted for Ms. Lauren Butschek-Neisler.

The Honorable State Representative Gene Wu voted for Dr. Kimberly Kay-Lopez.

Ms. Kupper noted three votes approving the selection of Ms. Lauren Butschek-Neisler to the open SCFRT Public Health Professional member position and one vote for the selection of Dr. Kimberly Kay-Lopez and announced Ms. Lauren Butschek-Neisler was selected to fill the open Public Health Professional member position.

Ms. Kupper announced the candidates for the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Family Service Provider position are Dr. Savannah Lusk and Dr. Wendy Middlemiss and called on each of the permanent members to record their individual vote for the SIDS Family Service Provider member position:

Dr. Tara Das voted for Dr. Savannah Lusk.

Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney voted for Dr. Wendy Middlemiss.

Ms. Letty Martinez voted for Dr. Savannah Lusk.

The Honorable State Representative Gene Wu voted to abstain.

Ms. Kupper noted two votes approving the selection of Dr. Savannah Lusk to the open SCFRT SIDS Family Service Provider member position, one vote for the selection of Dr. Wendy Middlemiss, and one abstention and announced Dr. Savannah Lusk was selected to fill the open SIDS Family Service Provider member position.

Ms. Kupper announced the candidates for the Child Advocate position are Ms. Stacey Head, Ms. Natalie Lopez, and Ms. Kerrie Stannell and called on each of the permanent members to record their individual vote for the Child Advocate member position:

Dr. Tara Das voted for Ms. Kerrie Stannell.

Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney voted for Ms. Natalie Lopez.

Ms. Letty Martinez voted for Ms. Natalie Lopez.

The Honorable State Representative Gene Wu voted for Ms. Natalie Lopez.

Ms. Kupper noted three votes approving the selection of Ms. Natalie Lopez to the open SCFRT Child Advocate member position and one vote for the selection of Ms.

Kerrie Stannell and announced Ms. Natalie Lopez was selected to fill the open Child Advocate member position.

Ms. Kupper announced the candidate for the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer position is Ms. Maricela Morales and called on each of the permanent members to record their individual vote for the Chief Juvenile Probation member position:

Dr. Tara Das voted for Ms. Maricela Morales.

Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney voted for Ms. Maricela Morales.

Ms. Letty Martinez voted for Ms. Maricela Morales.

The Honorable State Representative Gene Wu voted for Ms. Maricela Morales.

Ms. Kupper noted four votes approving the selection of Ms. Maricela Morales to the open SCFRT Chief Juvenile Probation member position and announced Ms. Maricela Morales was selected to fill the open Chief Juvenile Probation member position.

Ms. Kupper announced the candidate for the Child Abuse Prevention Specialist position is Ms. Stacey Head and called on each of the permanent members to record their individual vote for the Child Abuse Prevention Specialist member position:

Dr. Tara Das voted for Ms. Stacey Head.

Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney voted for Ms. Stacey Head.

Ms. Letty Martinez voted for Ms. Stacey Head.

The Honorable State Representative Gene Wu voted for Ms. Stacey Head.

Ms. Kupper noted four votes approving the selection of Ms. Stacey Head to the open SCFRT Child Abuse Prevention Specialist member position and announced Ms. Stacey Head was selected to fill the open Child Abuse Prevention Specialist member position.

Ms. Kupper announced the candidates for the Provider of Services to, or an Advocate for, Victims of Family Violence position are Ms. Wykesha Dixon, Ms. Courtney Garcia, Ms. Stacey Head (ineligible to be considered for this position as she was elected to the Child Abuse Prevention Specialist position), and Ms. Kerrie Stannell and called on each of the permanent members to record their individual vote for the Provider of Services to, or an Advocate for, Victims of Family Violence member position:

Dr. Tara Das voted for Ms. Wykesha Dixon.

Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney voted for Ms. Wykesha Dixon.

Ms. Letty Martinez voted for Ms. Wykesha Dixon.

The Honorable State Representative Gene Wu voted for Ms. Wykesha Dixon.

Ms. Kupper noted four votes approving the selection of Ms. Wykesha Dixon to the open SCFRT Provider of Services to, or an Advocate for, Victims of Family Violence member position and announced Ms. Wykesha Dixon was selected to fill the open Provider of Services to, or an Advocate for, Victims of Family Violence member position.

Ms. Kupper turned the floor back to Dr. Murthy.

Agenda Item 5: Review of Officer Election Procedure and Vice Chair Elections

Dr. Murthy announced his term on the SCFRT Committee will end on 2/1/2025 and Chief Hayes has agreed to assume the Chair position as of 2/1/2025. Dr. Murthy then requested Ms. Kupper provide members with the Officer Election procedure. Ms. Kupper provided this information then announced that Dr. Lawrence Thompson Jr. was nominated for the Vice Chair candidate by Dr. Murthy and has accepted the nomination. Ms. Kupper asked if anyone would like to nominate another candidate and there were no nominations from the floor.

Dr. Thompson Jr. provided a brief speech stating his qualifications for the role. Ms. Kupper requested a motion to elect Dr. Thompson Jr. by acclamation. Ms. Amy Smith made a motion to select Dr. Thompson Jr. as Vice Chair of the SCFRT Committee, Ms. LaViza Matthews seconded the motion. Following a roll call vote, the motion passed by a majority vote with 20 yeas (Abraham, Anzaldua, Baldwin, Das, Gabbert Charney, Garcia Flores, Garza-Cox, Gonzalez, Hayes, Howard, Judice, Kisson, Martinez, Matthews, Murthy, Powers, Ross, Smith, Thompson, Tillman), 0 nays and 0 abstentions. Dr. Thompson Jr. was elected as the Vice Chair of the SCFRT Committee.

Agenda Item 6: Presentation: Child Safety Review Teams

Dr. Murthy introduced Ms. Lisa Osborn and Ms. Tracye Risener, who provided a PowerPoint presentation, "Regional Child Death Review Committee – Citizen Review Teams." Key points included:

- What is a Regional Child Death Review Committee – Citizen Review Team (RCDRC-CRT)?
- Difference between RCDRC-CRT and Child Fatality Review Team

- Federal and State Laws
- How DFPS complies with Federal and State Laws
- The purpose of Each RCDRC-CRT Review
- What do RCDRC-CRT's Review?
- How the meetings contribute to Statewide Child Protective Investigations (CPI) and Child Protective Services (CPS) Improvement
- Membership Requirements and Expectations
- Membership Process

Ms. Osborn and Ms. Risener provided their contact information for the purpose of becoming a RCDRC-CRT member and asked if there were any questions.

Dr. Murthy thanked Ms. Osborn and Ms. Risener for their presentation.

Agenda Item 7: Overview and Consideration of Proposed Subcommittee

Dr. Murthy turned the floor over to Ms. Sarah Blezinger. Ms. Blezinger provided a brief overview from the last meeting's presentation on the SCFRT Subcommittee.

Key points included:

- SCFRT Subcommittee Proposal
- Child Safety Review Subcommittee

Ms. Blezinger asked if there were any questions and there were none. Dr. Murthy called for a motion to approve the proposed SCFRT subcommittee. Dr. Thompson Jr. made a motion to approve the proposed SCFRT subcommittee, Ms. Anzaldua seconded the motion. Following a roll call vote, the motion passed by a majority vote with 18 yeas (Abraham, Anzaldua, Gabbert Charney, Garcia Flores, Garza-Cox, Gonzalez, Hayes, Howard, Judice, Kissoon, Martinez, Matthews, Murthy, Powers, Ross, Smith, Thompson, Tillman), 0 nays and 0 abstentions. The formation of the SCFRT subcommittee was approved. Dr. Murthy announced Ms. Blezinger will send out an email requesting subcommittee volunteers. During the meeting, Ms. Matthews, Ms. Anzaldua, Judge Garcia Flores, Dr. Kissoon, and Ms. Gonzalez volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

Agenda Item 8: Public comment

No public comment was received.

Agenda Item 9: Comments, Adjournment, and Thank You

- Ms. Blezinger announced the Sheriff position is still open and requested members share this information with their colleagues and community contacts.
- Dr. Murthy noted the next SCFRT meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. February 14, 2025. Dr. Murthy adjourned the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

Below is the link to the archived video recording of the November 8, 2024, SCFRT Committee meeting to view and listen for approximately, two years from date meeting is posted in accordance with the HHSC records retention schedule.

[State Child Fatality Review Team Committee Meeting](#)