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# Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC)

Friday, March 22, 2024

9:00 a.m.

**FINAL APPROVED**

Virtual: Teams Meeting Platform

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

Robert Bernstein Building

Room K-100, First Floor

1100 West 49th Street

Austin, Texas 78756

## **Agenda Item 1: Call to order, roll call, and welcoming remarks.**

Dr. Carla Ortique, Chair, called the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC) meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Ortique, Chair, welcomed all committee members, staff, team members, and the public attending. She acknowledged the work done by the committee is a critical part in the efforts to address maternal deaths and disparities. Dr. Ortique stressed the works honor the lives that have been lost of Texas women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the year after and requested a moment of silence in honor of the women as well as their families and communities that have been touched by the loss of a mother.

Dr. Ortique introduced Ms. Jessica Arevalo, HHSC, Advisory Committee Coordination Office (ACCO) to read logistical announcements and call roll and determined if a quorum was reached.

Ms. Arevalo then proceeded with the meeting logistics and stated the meeting was being conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and conducted the roll call. Ms. Arevalo announced that with thirteen (10) members present, quorum was met.

Table 1: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee attendance Friday, March 22, 2023, meeting.

MEMBER NAME	IN ATTENDANCE
Dr. Meitra Doty	Yes
Dr. Catherine Eppes	Yes
Dr. Kelly Fegan-Bohm	Yes
Dr. Manda Hall	Yes
Dr. James Hill	No
Dr. Christina Murphey	No
Dr. Sherri Onyiego	Yes
Dr. Carla Ortique, Chair	Yes
Dr. Lavannya Pandit	No
Ms. Nancy Puig	No
Dr. Amy Raines-Milenkov	Yes

Dr. Patrick Ramsey, Vice Chair	Yes
Dr. Robin Page	Yes
Ms. Nakeenya Wilson	Yes
VACANT	-
VACANT	-

Yes: Indicates attended the meeting  
meeting

No: Indicates did not attend the meeting

Dr. Ortique reminded DSHS staff, presenters, and members to state name and turn camera on each time they speak.

**Agenda Item 2:** Consideration of December 8, 2023, draft meeting minutes

Dr. Ortique turned the floor over to Ms. Arevalo to proceed with the consideration of the December 8, draft minutes. Ms. Arevalo asked members if there was any edits or changes needed in either draft, hearing none she requested a motion to approve the December 8, minutes as presented.

**MOTION:**

Dr. Patrick Ramsey motioned to approve both sets of minutes as presented, Dr. Sherri Onyeigo seconded. Ms. Arevalo conducted a roll call vote, and the motion passed with thirteen (9) approve (Doty, Eppes, Fegan-Bohm, Hall, Onyiego, Ortique, Page, Raines-Milenkov, Ramsey), no disapprove, no abstain. Ms. Arevalo turned the floor back to Dr. Ortique to move to agenda item number three.

**Agenda Item 3: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee Subcommittees updates**

**Dr. Carla Ortique – Chair Update**

Dr. Carla Ortique provided the following:

- Addition of a new subcommittee on research activities to be chaired by Dr. Robin Page.
- The goal and work of the committee, having identified that close to 90% of maternal deaths are preventable.
- Complete review of 33 cases by the end of the March closed executive session meeting and on track to complete the review of the 2020 case cohort in time for the 2024 MMMRC-DSHS Legislative Report.
- The committee will meet for a two-day closed executive special meeting in May to complete review of the 2020 case cohort.
- Limitations of reviewing timely cases as it relates to redaction.
- Details around the learning collaborative organized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Details around the Maternal Mortality Review Information Application (MMRIA) user meeting.
- Concerns about replacement of the MMRIA system with a new state-based system.

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- Concerns about the review process as it relates to Health and Safety Code (HSC), Chapter 34, Section 34.013.

Dr. Carla Ortique turned the floor over to Dr. Sherri Onyiego, MMMRC Subcommittee on Maternal Health Disparities Chair, MD, Member, and introduced Dr. Catherine Eppes, MD, Member, Subcommittee on COVID-19 Chair to provide members with an update. Dr. Ortique noted a change in the Subcommittee on COVID-19 to Health Disaster Preparedness.

**Dr. Sherri Onyiego - Maternal Health Disparities**

Dr. Onyiego provided the following:

- The Subcommittee on Maternal Health Disparities met on February 22, 2024.
- The Subcommittee on Maternal Health Disparities is tasked with continuing work on the analyses and trends related to Maternal Mortality and Morbidity.
- The subcommittee is working on the following:
  - Revision of the article framework including the descriptive, qualitative, quantitative and data analysis. The review is anticipated to be completed in early Spring.
  - The analysis centers on identifying root causes of disparate outcomes based on race, socioeconomic status, education, geography (including the identification of maternal care deserts), and insurance coverage.
  - Refinement of specific elements within the Discrimination Assessment and Social Determinants of Health (DASH) Facilitated Discussion is still ongoing.
  - Opportunities to develop a homicide tool through best practices from other states and secondary data analysis from 2013. Focusing on gathering law enforcement data to solidify the homicide tool and process.

Dr. Carla Ortique introduced Dr. Catherine Eppes, MD, Member, Subcommittee on (COVID-19 to Health Disaster Preparedness) COVID-19 Chair to provide members with an update.

**Dr. Catherine Eppes – Subcommittee on COVID-19 Update**

- Rationale for changing the name from COVID-19 to Health Disaster Preparedness for larger impact.
- Subcommittee met recently on February 23, 2024 to review findings death related to COVID-19 and others impacted by COVID-19.
- Reviewing the COVID-19 tools and materials.
- Created a timeline of event during the pandemic in relation to public awareness, insurance-related changes, insurance, diagnostic, treatment, and vaccine to better help the review to make recommendations.
- Highlighted some common themes and findings from the review of COVID-19 cases.

Dr. Ortique thanked Dr. Eppes.

Dr. Ortique then reiterated the work of the subcommittees in addressing maternal mortality and mortality. Dr. Ortique also explained how committee members are volunteers and spend countless hours reviewing cases. She thanked the committee and the team of volunteers who dedicate their time to this work.

Dr. Ortique then opened the floor for further discussion/input/questions.

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- Dr. Patrick Ramsey, vice-chair encouraged continued sharing of maternal health data with the CDC. Dr. Ramsey also shared his concerns with HSC Chapter 34, Section 34.013.
  - Dr. Ortique mentioned the need to revisit the December 8 minute approval and welcomed Ms. Nakeenya Wilson, Member.
  - Ms. Wilson pointed out a discrepancy in the approved minutes as it relates to date of the solicitation to new members.
  - Dr. Ortique subsequently turned to Ms. Arevalo for a new vote on the amended December 8 minutes.

Ms. Arevalo called for a motion to approve the amended December 8 minute. Dr. Patrick Ramsey motioned to approve the minutes as amended, and Dr. Robin Page seconded. Ms. Arevalo conducted a roll call vote, and the motion passed with (Doty, Eppes, Fegan-Bohm, Hall, Ortique, Page, Raines-Milenkov, Ramsey, Wilson), no disapprove, no abstain.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee Team updates**

- Dr. Carla Ortique gave an opportunity to any of the team members to report to the members on information they might want to present including the successes and challenges in their team meetings.
- Dr. Manda Hall, MMMRC Team 4, discussed:
  - Explained the importance of small teams on the review process.
  - Highlighted the added layer of support, review, and verification done by the contractor, University of North Texas Health Science Center and DSHS staff.
  - Dr. Ortique highlighted the important work the Texas MMMRC is doing in Texas and the impact of the work on a national level.
- Dr. Patrick Ramsey, MMMRC Team 3:
  - Echoed the need for informant interviews for some suicide and homicide deaths.
  - Explained the importance of including maternal levels of care in case narratives to inform state efforts.
  - Echoed the issue of redaction.
- Dr. Catherine Eppes, MMMRC Team 2:
  - Reported that the team has reviewed 57% of cases received.
  - Challenges to the redaction and abstraction process.
  - Ms. Wilson provided insights that the team is able to identify other contributory factors, including mental health, substance use, obesity to the death of a person.
  - Ms. Wilson also discussed opportunities to collaborate with other agencies, the need to eliminate the redaction process, and incorporate informant interviews.
- Dr. Kelly Fegan-Bohm, MMMRC Team 1:
  - Provided insight about the homicide tool and the teams work in determining pregnancy-relatedness.

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Dr. Ortique proceeded to posted Agenda Item 5.

**Agenda Item 5: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee Operational and Maternal Health and Safety Initiative Updates.**

Dr. Ortique introduced Dr. Shruthi Arismendez, DSHS Maternal and Child Health Unit Director and Ms. Julie Stagg, DSHS Senior Nurse Advisor.

Dr. Arismendez provided the following updates:

- Dr. Jennifer Shufford, DSHS commissioner has appointed all six expiring or vacant positions.
  - Dr. Carla Ortique reappointed as physician specializing in obstetrics and will continue her role as chair of the MMMRC;
  - Dr. Patrick Ramsey reappointed as physician specializing in obstetrics with a specialty in maternal and fetal medicine. Dr. Ramsey will continue in his role as vice-chair.;
  - Dr. Meitra Doty, reappointed as a physician specializing in psychiatry;
  - Dr. Sarah Hartman, selected to serve as a physician specializing in pathology;
  - Dr. Nila Ricks, selected to serve as a social worker/social service provider; and
  - Dr. Morna Gonsoulin, selected to serve as medical examiner or coroner responsible for recording deaths;
- Dr. Arismendez thanked the solicitation review panel and all applicants who applied for the positions.
- Dr. Arismendez provided update on the following seven new positions mandated by the 88th legislature:
  - Physician specializing in Emergency Care;
  - Physician specializing in Anesthesiology;
  - Two (2) community members with relevant experience in health care and data analysis:
    - one representing urban Texas;
    - one representing rural Texas;
  - One managed care organization representative;
  - Physician specializing in Cardiology; and
  - Physician specializing in Oncology;
- Review of applications is in process and new members will be announced soon.

Dr. Arismendez, introduced Julie Stagg, Senior Nurse Advisor.

Ms. Stagg provided the following updates:

- Update about the February 2024, Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies.
- Update about the high-risk maternal care coordination service pilot program.
- Currently in the new phase of launching a new phase of the Texas campaign.
- Expanding outreach to healthcare providers through the TexasAIM program.
- Update on the TexasAIM severe hypertension and learning collaborative learning session three, across five cohorts across the state.

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- Planning for the third opioid and other substance use disorder innovation and improvement learning collaborative in June 2024.
  - Planning on rolling out a TexasAIM bundle on sepsis.
  - Developing statewide plans on simulations on mentor support.

Dr. Ortique opened the floor for questions and comments and proceeded to agenda item 7.

**Agenda Item 7: HHSC Medicaid and CHIP Services: Women’s Health Overview – House Bill 12**

Dr. Ortique introduced Ms. Valerie Mayes, DSHS Deputy State Medicaid Director.

Ms. Mayes presented on the implementation of House Bill 12 as it pertains to the Medicaid extension for women up to 12 months after pregnancy.

Dr. Ortique opened the floor for questions and comments.

Ms. Mayes answered questions posed by MMMRC members.

Dr. Ortique thanked Ms. Mayes and proceeded to agenda item 6.

**Agenda Item 6: Perinatal Advisory Council: Update for MMMRC**

Dr. Ortique introduced Dr. Sadhana Chheda, Vice-Chair, Perinatal Advisory Council.

Dr. Chheda presented on the Perinatal Advisory Council work and how it aligns with and support the MMMRC in protecting maternal health in the state.

Dr. Ortique opened the floor for questions and comments.

Dr. Chheda answered questions posed by MMMRC members.

Dr. Ortique thanked Dr. Chheda and proceeded to agenda item 8.

**Agenda Item 8: Future Agenda Items**

Dr. Ortique opened discussion for new business and potential agenda items for the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 18, 2024.

- Dr. Ortique, Chair, announced the next MMMRC meeting is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, June 17 and 18, 2024.
- Dr. Hall shared that the Dr. Shufford, DSHS Commissioner will present on DSHS maternal and child health data modernization and sharing efforts at the MMMRC meeting at the June MMMRC meeting.

Dr. Ortique proceeded to agenda item 9.

**Agenda Item 9: Public Comment**

Ms. Arevalo ACCO Facilitator, read the public comment announcement and coordinated with the ACCO production team requests from stakeholders who registered or were on-site to provide public comment. Ms. Arevalo noted that one written comment was received.

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**Oral public comment –**

- Ms. Dinah Waranch, Representative of the Consortium of Texas Nurse Midwives and the Coalition of Texas Birth Centers.
- Ms. Jones Smith, President of the Coalition of Texas Birth Centers.
- Ms. Erin Bolt, Nurse Family Partnership
- Morgan Miles, Executive Director of Community-Based Doulas

**Agenda Item 10: Executive Session: to review cases under Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 34. Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee, Section 34.007. Selection and Review of Cases as authorized by Section 34.004.**

Dr. Ortique read the legislation allowing the Review Committee to move into a closed executive session.

She announced the committee will go into closed session at 11:45 am.

The committee will return later in afternoon to reopen the meeting from closed to open session before adjourning for the day, as statutorily required. There will be a break to allow for room turnover and the committee will resume their meeting, in closed session.

Ms. Arevalo announced to members of the public that this concluded the open meeting for the morning and the public was informed that the review committee would return later in the afternoon to open the closed session and then adjourn.

**Agenda Item 11: Adjournment and Thank You**

Dr. Ortique reopened the meeting at 2:34 p.m., and stated with no further business or discussion she would adjourn the meeting at 2:34 p.m.

Below is the link to the archived video of the March 22, 2023, Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC) that will be available for viewing approximately two years from date meeting was posted on website and based on the DSHS records retention schedule.

[Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee \(MMMRC\) March 22, 2024.](#)