**Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee**

**Open Session Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting of September 18, 2024**

**Massachusetts Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee**  
**Minutes of the Regularly Scheduled Committee Meeting**

[**Public Meeting Notice**](https://www.mass.gov/event/maternal-mortality-and-morbidity-review-committee-meeting-september-18-2024-09-18-2024)

**Date/time**: September 18, 2024, 9:00am-12:00pm

**Place**: Virtual meeting hosted over Microsoft Teams

**Microsoft Teams Meeting**: Meeting ID: 243 050 885 53; Passcode: AQDdva

**PROCEEDINGS**

A regular meeting of the Massachusetts Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (M.G.L. c. 111, § 24O) was held on Wednesday, September 18, 2024.

**Members present**: Allison Bryant, Chair; Sarah L. Stone; Mindy Hull; Michele Helgeson; Tonja Santos; Leena Mittal; Sara Shields; Becky Cruz-Crosson; Melissa Duenas-Witter; Lucia Soraya dos Santos; Linda Sagor; Viveka Prakash-Zawisza; Eugene Declercq; Anne Marie Valente; Megan Miller; Daniel Rodrigues; Michaela Farber; Naima Thavory Joseph; Katelyne Louis.

**Members not present:** Maryanne Bombaugh; Collette Dieujuste; Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha; James Wang; Alison Sekelsky; Drucilla Roberts.

**Also in attendance:** Laura Kattan, MMMRT Medical Record Abstractor, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Margi Coggins, MCH Clinical Coordinator, Maternal & Infant Health Initiatives, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Mahsa Yazdy, Director, Division for Surveillance, Research and Promotion of Perinatal Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Susan Manning, CDC Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Program Assignee, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Barbara Schultz, MMMRT Medical Record Abstractor, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Xiaohui Cui, Epidemiologist, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Jean MacBarron, MMMRT Medical Record Abstractor, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Brooke LaMere, CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellow, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Katrina Plummer, MMMRT Data Quality Coordinator, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Sophia Apostola, Deputy General Counsel, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Ruth Jacobson Hardy, Director of Women and Family Services, Bureau of Substance Addition Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Marsha Grabau, Biomedtrician, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Rebecca White, Deputy Chief of Staff, Massachusetts Department of Public Health (left after swearing in); Phillip Duarte, Boards and Commissions Manager, Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (left after swearing in).

All participants joined remotely, and all votes were taken by verbal roll call.

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**Discussion**: Dr. Allison Bryant called the meeting to order and confirmed by roll call that a quorum of the Committee members was present.

**Action**: At 9:02 a.m. Allison Bryant called the September 18, 2024 meeting of the Committee to order.

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**Discussion**: Members were sworn in as members of the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee.

**Action**: At 9:05 a.m. members were sworn in by Rebecca White and Phillip Duarte.

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**Discussion**: Sophia Apostola provided a brief presentation on the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and obligations for public bodies and public body members related to the Open Meeting Law.

**Action**: At 9:15 a.m. Sophia Apostola made a presentation to the Committee related to general requirements of the Open Meeting Law.

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**Discussion**: Sarah L. Stone provided a brief presentation related to the purpose and scope of work of the MMMRC. This included an overview of the review process and the key questions that are deliberated upon during review of pregnancy-associated deaths (was the death pregnancy-related?, what was the underlying cause of death?, was the death preventable?, what are the contributing factors to the death?, and what specific and feasible actions might have changes the course of events?). She also reviewed confidentiality procedures for the MMMRC, including that access to information for MMMRC reviews is provided for the sole purpose of reviewing incidents of maternal mortality and morbidity and to make recommendations to improve maternal outcomes and eliminate preventable maternal deaths.

**Action**: At 9:30 a.m. Sarah L. Stone made a presentation to the Committee related to the purpose and scope of work of the Committee.

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**Topic**: Subcommittee to review 2019 Pregnancy-associated Deaths

**Discussion:** The DPH MMMRT proposed the creation of a subcommittee of MMMRC members to conduct reviews of 2019 pregnancy-associated deaths in October. Nine MMMRC members volunteered to serve on the subcommittee, including: Allison Bryant, Sarah L. Stone, Eugene Declercq, Michele Helgeson, Melissa Duenes-Witter, Michaela Farber, Tonja Santos, Becky Cruz-Crosson, and Leena Mittal.

**Action:** Motion by A.M. Valente, seconded by M. Helgeson, and voted by verbal roll call with A. Bryant, S. L. Stone, M. Hull, T. Santos, L Mittal, S. Shields, B. Cruz-Crosson, M. Duenas-Witter, L.S. dos Santos, L. Sagor, V. Prakash-Zawisza, E. Declercq; M. Miller, D. Rodrigues, M. Farber, N. Thavory Joseph, and K. Louis unanimously in favor to approve the subcommittee.

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**Topic:** Motion to move to executive session:

**Discussion:** Daniel Rodrigues made a motion to close the open session of the Committee and enter into executive session to review pregnancy-associated deaths.

A. Bryant mentioned that the Committee intends to review relevant records and reports pertaining to individual cases of maternal morality to determine, to the extent possible, whether the death was pregnancy-related and, if so, what actions could be taken to prevent the death. She cited the reason for moving into executive session was to maintain the confidentiality of information collected when reviewing cases of maternal mortality and announced that the Committee would not reconvene in open session after the executive session.

**Action:** Motion by D. Rodrigues, seconded by M. Hull, and voted by verbal roll call with A. Bryant, S. L. Stone, M. Helgeson, T. Santos, L Mittal, S. Shields, B. Cruz-Crosson, M. Duenas-Witter, L. Sagor, V. Prakash-Zawisza, E. Declercq, A.M. Valente, M. Miller, M. Farber, N. Thavory Joseph, and K. Louis unanimously in favor to move to executive session.

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The MMMRC moved to executive session as authorized by M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) for purposes complying with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 111, § 24O, which require the MMMRC to maintain the confidentiality of information collected when reviewing case of maternal mortality.  
  
Specifically, the MMMRC moved to executive session to review relevant records and reports pertaining to individual cases of maternal morality to determine, to the extent possible, whether the death was pregnancy related and, if so, what actions could be taken to prevent the death.

The Committee did not reconvene in open session at the end of the executive session.