

Remembering and Responding

Volume 2 Issue 1
June 2007

Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Newsletter

BEST PRACTICES

Working With HIPAA

HIPAA has presented a barrier to DVFRTs. Can teams obtain records or not? We don't have an authoritative answer. However, Baltimore City has worked with HIPAA regulations and produced a positive, problem-solving approach. The city health commissioner prepared a standard cover letter to health facilities. The letter certifies the purpose of requested information and urges the facility "...as a key partner in this process, to facilitate access to information for review of this case." A second sheet makes the specific records request. We commend Baltimore City for working through the problem and paving the way for other teams. Visit the MNADV website at www.mnadv.org to view the certification and request letters.

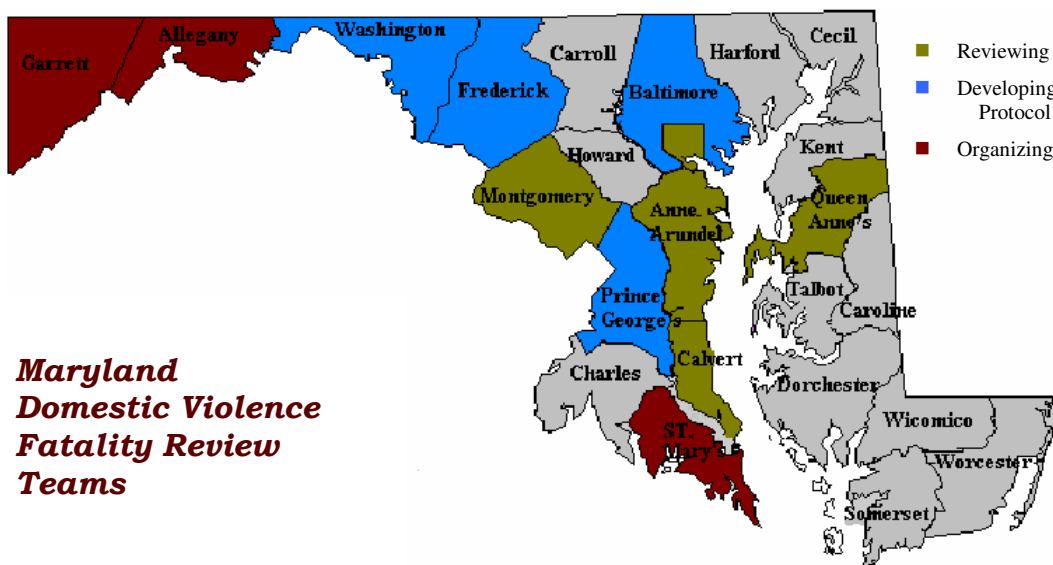


Conducting Interviews

Dr. Jackie Campbell has offered Maryland fatality review teams the format she uses to conduct interviews in her femicide research. The questionnaire takes about a half-hour to complete. It captures factors that contributed to the victim's death, enables trend-reading, and allows teams to collect data in a structured way. Visit the MNADV website at www.mnadv.org to view the questionnaire.



Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams



Quarterly Newsletter

This newsletter is a product of the Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Council. The Council provides support for DVFRTs, encourages jurisdictions to consider establishing a team, discusses relevant issues, and offers recommendations for change. The Council consists of the chairpersons, vice-chairs, and other representatives of Maryland review teams, and is assisted by the MNADV.



Maryland Review Teams

- Anne Arundel County**
Operating since 2003.
David Cordle, Chairperson.
- Calvert County**
Operating since 2004.
Jennifer Morton, Chairperson.
- Montgomery County**
Operating since December 2005.
Laura Chase, Chairperson.
- Baltimore City**
Operating since January 2006.
Dorothy Lennig, Chairperson.
- Queen Anne's County**
Operating since January 2006.
Frank Kratovil, Chairperson.
- Baltimore County**
Operating since May 2006,
developing its protocol.
Marci Van De Mark, Coordinator.
- Prince George's County**
Operating since May 2006,
completed its protocol.
Patricia Smoot, Chairperson.
- Washington County**
Operating since June 2006,
developing its protocol.
Col. Doug Mullendore,
Coordinator.
- Frederick County**
Operating since October 2006, first
team meeting scheduled.
Mary Howser, Coordinator.
- St. Mary's County**
Organized May 2007.
Ella Mae Russell, Coordinator.
- Allegany County**
Organized May 2007.
Kristin Morton, Coordinator.
- Garrett County**
Organized June 2007.
Lisa Thayer Welch, Coordinator.

Medical Evidence Packet

A team under the leadership of Dr. Dan Sheridan of Johns Hopkins University has created a packet designed to improve the collection of medical evidence to facilitate prosecution of domestic violence cases. It includes several assessment screens, a medical evaluation sheet, and a forensic nurse consult. The Baltimore City DVFRT has assembled a Medical Subcommittee to study the packet to consider its value for medical practitioners, law enforcement, and prosecutors. We'll keep you informed.



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Congratulations!

- **Montgomery and Queen Anne's counties** and **Baltimore City** are now conducting case reviews.
- **Washington and Prince George's counties** have completed their protocols and are preparing to conduct case reviews.
- **St. Mary's and Allegany counties** organized in May, and **Garrett County** in June.

More on Recommendations...

Turning the Mirror Around

Teams have to work hard just to develop substantive recommendations, as we examined in the last issue. Baltimore City addressed this matter head-on with a memo that Chairperson Dorothy Lennig wrote to the team:

"I want to make sure we ask the 'hard' questions about each case before we finish it....I would suggest that we have not really faced the difficult systemic issues. I think we have identified many of the issues this case has raised about what the victim did or did not do, but we have not truly turned the mirror around to try to examine how each of our agencies could have done a better job. The following are some of the questions I would like to explore..."

Dorothy is trying to create a balance between "finger-pointing" and accountability. It's not always easy to "turn the mirror around." Thanks for pointing the way, Dorothy!

Evoking Social Change

Teams should understand that making recommendations and seeking change is their reason for being. Another great example of a team that has not lost sight of this goal is in Queen Anne's County. The team has been taking a serious look at the state of mental health issues and dilemmas that have surfaced. As a result, they have formulated a number of specific but systemic recommendations and are **taking them to the governor for action!** Teams should develop a sense of empowerment to take actions they believe are necessary in order to get a fair hearing for their recommendations and to, ultimately, "evoke social change."



“Due to high incidences of mental health issues, findings should be shared with mental health professionals...”

— Florida Fatality Review 2006 Annual Report

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

6911 Laurel Bowie Road,
Suite 309
Bowie, MD 20715
(301) 352-4574
info@mnadv.org
www.mnadv.org

Save the Date

The bi-annual meeting of the Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Council will be on **Wednesday, September 19th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** Please mark your calendars.

