**Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholder Group**

**Minutes**

**Monday, December 9, 2019**

**2:00 to 4:00 PM**

**Members in attendance:** Linda Alexander, Bonnie DiPietro, Elizabeth Dawes Gay, Kari J. Gorkos, Janice Miller, Rosemarie DiMauro Satyshur

**Members absent:** David Mann, Russell Moy, Meghana Rao, Amanda L. Costley

1. **Introductions**

Dr. S. Lee Woods, the former Director of the Department of Health’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau has retired. Dr. Linda Alexander, Reproductive Health Medical Director will be resuming her duties.

1. **Review and Approval of Minutes**

Dr. Alexander summarized the minutes from the previous meeting in September and read the recommendations the Group presented in their report, which has been drafted and submitted. The minutes from the previous meeting were unanimously approved. Group members requested that future minutes be more detailed.

1. **Discussion of Membership and Meetings**

Dr. Alexander opened the floor for a discussion about the importance of growing Group membership and increasing capacity to assure representation from all groups affected by maternal mortality.

Group members suggested inviting representatives from doula groups, a community-based group that works with the Latino community, organizations that serve immigrants and refugees, fatherhood groups, and family and loss groups. Group members have connections with many organizations that represent these target populations and might be interested in participating. Group members will send contacts to Dr. Alexander so she can extend an invitation. A similar discussion in the September meeting occurred and resulted in two individuals being invited to participate. One of the individuals has a pending application to join the Group. Group members also suggested looking at the statute that created the Group, as it lists stakeholders who should be encouraged to join.

The Group agreed meeting quarterly is ideal, as biannual meetings would not give the Group enough time to properly cover the subject. Dr. Alexander reminded the members that the Department of Health is a member of the Group, but any member can preside over meetings or introduce topics or stakeholders to the Group.

1. **Maryland Mortality Review (MMR) Program presentation by Dr. Alexander**

The MMR Program sponsors a Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMR Committee) of clinical and public health experts to review all pregnancy-associated deaths (as recommended by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists), defined as deaths among Maryland resident women while pregnant or within one year of conclusion of pregnancy from any cause. Each case is reviewed to determine if the death was “pregnancy related,” meaning that the death was from a cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes.

The process the MMR Committee uses to identify and review cases is as follows:

* The Vital Statistics Administration reviews all death certificates for women of childbearing age and their cause of death.
* The Maryland death certificate includes a check box that identifies if the individual was pregnant within the past 12 months.
* Cases reported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner are also reviewed for evidence of pregnancy in deceased women.
* Other sources of information, including birth certificates and fetal records, are used to gather as much knowledge as possible.
* After identification of cases, health care professionals assigned as case abstractors de-identify the patient and create a summary of the person’s status prior to death.
* These cases are reviewed monthly by the MMR Committee.
* The MMR Committee issues recommendations based on review of these cases.
* MMR Committee recommendations come to the MMR Stakeholder Group for review and additions.
* Deaths are considered either preventable (due to medical or social factors) or not preventable. Many of the reviewed deaths are considered preventable.

1. **Other Business**

The release date of the 2019 Maternal Mortality Report has not been determined. Case reviews for the 2020 Maternal Mortality Report are in process. Dr. Alexander is going to a conference regarding the Maternal Mortality Review Information Application system and will report any relevant changes or information back to the Group.

The next meeting will be **Monday, March 9, 2020 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.** at the Maryland Hospital Association.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Alexander, MD, MPP, FACOG

Acting Medical Director, Maternal Child Health Bureau, Maryland Department of Health