

Illinois Department on Aging
Fatality Review Team Advisory Council Meeting
2:00 p.m., August 22, 2019

Members Present:

Chair Diane Michalak (Area 02), Co-Chair Teva Shirley (Area 08), Yvonne Anderson (Area 01), Donna Schnell (Area 10); David Mitchell (Area 11), Brenda Fleming (Area 06), Telly Papanikolaou (Area 03); Loren Carrera (Area 02); Duane Northrup (Area 05)

Members Absent:

Jim Allmon (Area 07), Amy Brown (Area 05), Mark Thomas (Area 03), Clarissa Palermo (Area 12), Holly Kozinski (Area 4), Nancy Hinton (Area 09); Lana Sample (Area 05), Scott Kinley (Area 11)

IDoA:

Maureen Squires, Lois Moorman, Claudia Kemple, Jeanice McDade, Karen Kloppe, Anne Stewart-Reed

Meeting called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Minutes from May 23 meeting were approved.

Updates:

Maureen said Aristotle “Telly” Papanikolaou, Director of APS at Alternatives in Moline, has officially been appointed to the Council, having been assigned a term from Director Basta, and he will be a welcomed addition. Since Jon Hofacker resigned from the Council, there remains a vacancy for Area 13. Other members may be in need of reappointment which she will identify and ensure terms are extended.

Annual Report

The FY '19 Annual Report draft was earlier emailed to Council members. With noted corrections, the Council approved that it be posted on the Department's website.

Maureen noted that some cases are not entered until after the fiscal year ends. In these cases, the data is retrieved whenever it is entered and added to the report already posted. Therefore, some numbers in the report sometimes slightly increase over time.

Maureen asked members how to improve the method of data collection and several options were discussed. For example, having a data form constructed more narrative in design with open-ended questions to complete rather than clicking on drop-down boxes may garner more useful information for reports.

Another issue is that the information is currently entered into a secure database even though it does not contain identifying information. Thus, the information may not need to be secured in this manner. Since some on the teams are encountering trouble gaining access or maintaining access (such roles change regularly, persons may have passwords expire etc.), it may make more sense to have the information sent directly to Maureen to house the information. Another option would be to give any recommendations emerging from an FRT to Maureen immediately after the FRT meets but continue having the data entry person enter statistical information in the data bank.

Maureen noted some clear patterns are emerging from the information garnered to date:

Teams are struggling to find substantive cases to discuss quarterly and are mainly relying on suspicious death reports as the source. In time, legislation may be needed to allow cases to be reviewed concurrent to prosecution. IDoA liaisons report there are good cases that are prohibited from being discussed as they proceed through the court system due to provisions in the APS Act.

One development that may be helpful is that the Council previously agreed that IDoA pursue an agreement with the Illinois Department of Public Health's Division of Vital Records that would alert APS when a client dies (along with any other pertinent information). The Department currently has a data-sharing agreement with IDPH DVR relative to CCP. Maureen informed the Council that an inter-agency agreement is routing within IDoA and awaiting the Director's signature. Sometime this Fall, this "triggering mechanism" will be in place and hopefully result in more cases to review.

Another ongoing issue is that many mandated reporters (first responders, medical personnel, law enforcement et. all) do not seem aware or conscientious of their role that they must alert APS when encountering abuse and neglect. Such professionals all undergo different training and continuing education requirements to become certified, licensed, accredited etc. This will require more education and training from the Department by reaching out to various associations. Another goal is to educate more professionals within the legal and judicial arena. It is hoped that a legal track can be developed for APS conferences to offer continuing education credits for these professionals.

Legislation

Council Co-Chair Diane Michalak was congratulated upon the signage of Senate Bill 69 on August 16. It is now a Public Act with three important components. It provides that a person who commits the offense of financial exploitation of an elderly person or a person with a disability may be tried where the victim lives (as opposed to just where the offense occurred); that theft from a person with a disability is a Class 2 felony and that consent is not a defense (i.e. the claim by abuser that the person agreed to give them money etc.) if the person lacked capacity.

Diane noted that language was removed to preclude the sealing of financial exploitation or criminal abuse/neglect, due to objections, but it may be an initiative to resurrect in the future.

Lois reported that Senate Joint Resolution 13 passed and creates an Elder Abuse Task Force. The task force is charged with analyzing the effectiveness of Adult Protective Services in Illinois and other states to develop a long-term plan to improve outcomes for older persons and persons with a disability. It is to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly by January, 2021. There are 22 members and the first meeting will be at IDoA on August 29.

Maureen stated at the previous Council meeting that the Governor and DCFS Director ordered that “crisis intervention teams” be created to review any child’s death. Members have since been appointed and consists of high-ranking DCFS officials. The difference between the crisis teams and the death review teams appears to be timeliness, as the crisis team will meet immediately upon a death.

Adult Protective Services Conference

The Council was informed that the Adult Protective Services Conference will be held October 28-30 at the Holiday Inn in Itasca, the venue used last year. (APAC) Council members were encouraged to present on FRTs at the Conference or provide recommendations for other sessions to be presented. It is also hoped to have a national speaker on FRTs present.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:00p.m. The Council’s next meeting will be November 20.