

**Texas State Child Fatality Review Team (SCFRT) Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 18, 2022  
10:00 a.m.**

**Location: Microsoft Teams Live Event**

Table 1: Texas State Child Fatality Review Team Committee attendance at the February 18, 2022, meeting.

MEMBER NAME	IN ATTENDANCE
Chief Michael Baldwin, Chair	Yes
Dr. Ada Booth	Yes
Judge Shane Brassell	Yes
Dr. Kim Cheung	Yes
Dr. Tara Das	Yes
Ms. Kristi Elliott	Yes
Sheriff Christopher Forbis	Yes
Dr. Sanjuanita Garza-Cox	Yes
Captain Michael Hayes	Yes
Dr. Owais Khan	No
Ms. Letty Martinez	No
Ms. LaViza Mathews	Yes
Ms. Diane MacLeod	No
Ms. Clarissa Mora	Yes
Dr. Kenton Murthy, Vice Chair	Yes
Ms. Angelica Powers	Yes
Dr. Jennifer Ross	Yes
Ms. Kathryn Sibley	Yes
Ms. Amy Smith	Yes
Captain Steven Tellez	Yes
Mr. Lawrence Thompson, Jr.	Yes
Mr. Jeremy Triplett	Yes
Dr. Jeannine Von Stultz	Yes
Mr. Gene Wu, State Representative	Yes, joined at 10:15am

**Agenda Item 1: Welcome, Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum**

Dr. Kenton Murthy, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m., and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Ms. Sallie Allen, Advisory Committee Coordination Office (ACCO), Texas Health and Human Services, provided logistics, called roll, asked each member to introduce themselves, and determined a quorum present.

**Agenda Item 2: Introduction of new committee members**

Dr. Murthy introduced new members, Sheriff Christopher Forbis and Ms. Heather Fleming, and congratulated them on their appointment. He also thanked the returning members for their continued service to the committee.

**Agenda Item 3: Consideration of the November 8, 2021, Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Allen called for edits/changes to the meeting minutes. Hearing none, she requested a motion to approve the November 8, 2021, meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Dr. Ada Booth made a motion to approve the November 8, 2021, meeting minutes and Ms. Amy Smith seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion carried with twenty-one approvals and no abstentions.

**Agenda Item 4: Vote on open SCFRT positions – six permanent members**

Dr. Murthy announced the voting process is carried out by the permanent members of the committee. He turned the floor over to Ms. Sallie Allen to provide information related to the voting process.

Ms. Allen announced the names of the six permanent members: Dr. Tara Das, Ms. Heather Fleming, Ms. Letty Martinez, Ms. Kathryn Sibley, Mr. Jeremy Triplett, and Representative Gene Wu. In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the members’ vote is not confidential, and they will be called on to cast their vote aloud for the record.

Ms. Sarah Blezinger announced the position, the candidates, and the organization they represented. Ms. Allen proceeded with the voting process, announced the position, and called on each member to cast their vote aloud. The votes were tallied, and the elected candidate was announced. Following is a summation of the votes cast.

Election for Provider Positions - Texas State Child Fatality Review Team Committee - February 18, 2022								
VOTE BALLOT - Permanent Six Members								
POSITION	Candidate Name	Dr. Tara Das	Heather Fleming	Letty Martinez	Kathryn Sibley	Jeremy Triplett	Rep. Gene Wu	TALLY
Child Advocate	Kerrie Judice	For	Abstain	Absent	For	For	For	4
Criminal prosecutor involved in prosecuting crimes against children	Angelica Powers		For	Absent	For	For	For	4
Criminal prosecutor involved in prosecuting crimes against children	Lisa Stewart							
Criminal prosecutor involved in prosecuting crimes against children	Nick Socias							
Provider of services to, or an advocate for, victims of family violence	Amy Smith	For	Abstain	Absent	For	For	For	4
Public health professional	Celestine Grummum							
Public health professional	Dr. Kenton Murthy	For	For	Absent	For	For	For	4
Public health professional	Kimberly Kay Lopez							
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome family service provider	Sanjuanita Garza-Cox	For	Abstain	Absent	For	For	For	4

Dr. Murthy thanked Ms. Allen and Ms. Blezinger for the coordination of this voting process.

**Agenda Item 5: Review and adoption of Officer Election Procedure and Officer Elections – full committee**

Dr. Murthy turned the floor over to Ms. Allen and she read loud the procedure and process for electing presiding officers. She conducted a roll call vote, and the members adopted the election procedure and process as presented.

Ms. Allen advised that the two-year presiding officer term for Chief Baldwin and Dr. Murthy was affected by the Covid pandemic and cancellation of meetings. ACCO discussed this issue with legal counsel and based on the conversation, legal advised that ACCO could provide the members with the following options to consider for the officer elections.

- 1) Motion to extend the officer term for Chief Baldwin and Dr. Murthy to December 31, 2023, or
- 2) Motion to proceed with the officer election process and open floor for nominations.

Ms. Allen requested a motion from the members on their choice of the options provided.

**MOTION:**

Based on the options provided, Dr. Kim Cheung motioned to extend the presiding officer term to December 31, 2023 for Chief Michael Baldwin and Dr. Kenton Murthy. Ms. Angelica Powers seconded the motion to extend their term. Ms. Allen conducted a roll call vote to extend the presiding officer terms to December 31, 2023, and the motion carried with nineteen approvals, and two abstentions.

Ms. Blezinger will contact Chief Baldwin and Dr. Murthy to review and discuss the agenda items for the next meeting.

Dr. Murthy thanked Ms. Allen, and on behalf of Chief Baldwin, thanked the members for their approval to extend their terms and allow them to continue to serve the committee in their officer roles.

**Agenda Item 6: Updates and announcements – Sarah Blezinger, Department of State Health Services (DSHS)**

Dr. Murthy turned the floor over to Ms. Blezinger and she provided the following announcements and updates.

**a. Update and vote on SCFRT Legislatively Mandated Report due April 2022**

- The report contains aggregate child fatality data from local teams and prevention recommendations from the State committee based on local team input.
- The report is distributed to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than April 1st of each even numbered year.
- The report is currently undergoing review by DSHS administration and once the review is complete, the report may be submitted to the committee chair, Chief Baldwin, for one final review.
- A copy of the report was provided in the member meeting packet for review. A vote is needed to approve and grant Chief Baldwin to have the final committee review of the biennial report draft once it is completed with its current review process.
- Ms. Blezinger turned the floor over to Ms. Allen to conduct a roll call vote.

Ms. Allen requested a motion to approve the draft 2022 State Child Fatality Review Team biennial report as presented and to grant Chief Baldwin authority for final committee review and approval of the report to be submitted to the Commissioner.

**MOTION:**

Dr. Murthy motioned to approve the draft 2022 State Child Fatality Review Team biennial report as presented and to grant Chief Baldwin authority for final committee review and approval of the report to be submitted to the Commissioner. Ms. Kristi Elliott seconded the motion. Ms. Allen conducted a roll call vote, and the motion carried with eighteen members approving the 2022 draft biennial report as presented, and three abstaining. Seventeen members approved the grant authority to Dr. Baldwin and four abstained.

Ms. Allen turned the floor back to Ms. Blezinger to continue her updates.

**b. DSHS Maternal and Child Health/Office of Injury Prevention updates**

- Mr. Michael Spencer, former Maternal and Child Health Unit Director, has left the Department of State Health Services to pursue a new career opportunity. The Maternal and Child Health Section is actively recruiting a new unit director.
- Ms. Lori Gabbert Charney is the new Maternal and Health Section Director in the Community Health Improvement Division.
- Ms. Jia Benno is the new branch manager for the Office of Injury Prevention at the Department of State Health Services.

**Agenda Item 7: Suicide Prevention: Youth Screening – Laura Hernandez Gold, LCSW-S, HHSC Office of Mental Health Coordination**

Dr. Murthy introduced Ms. Laura Hernandez Gold, with the Office of Mental Health Coordination, HHSC. She is currently assisting in the coordination of the Texas Education Agency project AWARE, which stands for Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education Grant, as well as continuing to aide in state suicide safety care. She is a licensed clinical social worker and supervisor with over 20 years of experience working with children, families, and schools in the community.

Before her presentation, Ms. Hernandez Gold reminded everyone to practice self-care and take a break if needed. She reminded everyone that they can always contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) at 1-800-273-8255 or reach out via text to the crisis text line by texting TX to 741741. She noted that on July 16th, 2022, the NSPL number will become a new 3-digit phone number "988" which will help improve access to crisis services throughout the United States and is also available to provide help with mental health crisis assistance. She then proceeded and referenced the handout and presentation, *Suicide Prevention: Youth Screening*.

Highlights included:

- Language, importance of words used to discuss suicide:
  - Term most widely used is "committed", implying someone may be a criminal, immoral or committed a criminal offense. Suicide is not a crime or an immoral act.
  - Using safe neutral, factual, and respectful language avoids the possibility of describing suicide in either a positive or a negative way.
- Identify evidence-based best practices for screening youth and tools:
  - Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10 to 34.
  - About 1 in 10 Texas High school students have attempted suicide in the past 12 months.
  - To understand the "why" about suicide, we must first look at the risk and protective factors and the interaction between them.
  - Two screening tools available: Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (CSSRS) and Ask Suicide Screening Questions (ASQ).
- HHSC Suicide Care Initiative (SCI):
  - Funded by a federal mental health block grant.
  - SCI began in 2019 and continued the implementation of safer suicide care practices which began in 2013 under a previous Garrett Lee Smith SAMSHA grant.
  - SCI's focus is to enhance suicide care in the public mental health system through local infrastructure in the local mental health authorities (LMHAs)/local behavioral health authorities (LBHAs).
- Project RYSE - Resilient Youth, Safer Environments:
  - Is a SAMHSA 5-year funded Youth Suicide Prevention State grant.
  - The goal is to create comprehensive suicide safer early intervention and prevention systems aimed at supporting youth serving organizations.
  - It began in Galveston County and has expanded to other school districts within the county.

- Advancing Wellness & Resilience in Education (AWARE) and screening tools:
  - A SAMHSA five-year grant was awarded to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in 2018 and another AWARE Grant was granted in 2021.
  - Goals are placement of mental health specialists in identified schools and integrate school mental health services to reduce the barriers for families when it comes to transportation to a LMJ site to screen for mental health needs.
  - Mental health needs are screened using evidence-based practices with a three-tiered system of support, Tier 1 being universal services and supports across the school environment for all students, Tier 2 and Tier 3 being more targeted with student interventions.
  - Screening in Project AWARE consists of several different types of screeners.
    - Student Risk Screening Scale -Internalizing/Externalizing (SRSS-IE) Universal;
    - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and Columbia Impairment Scale (CIS) Targeted;
    - Child PTSD Symptom Screener (CPSS) Targeted; and
    - C-SSRS Targeted (suicide specific).
  - Training resources, web resources, and crisis information are listed in the powerpoint presentation.
  - For general questions, please email the Suicide Prevention team at [suicide.prevention@hhs.Texas.gov](mailto:suicide.prevention@hhs.Texas.gov).

Discussions addressed:

- Models to help manage small, rural communities that tend to have less resources available.
- Implementation of clinicians in schools, partnership by an MOU with LMHAs and LBHAs, help solidify and eliminate some of the barriers that the family encounters.
- The evaluation team at the University of Texas UTIMH are collecting and evaluating data for Project AWARE, Project RYSE, and SCI. The annual reports for Project AWARE are on TEA website, and Ms. Hernandez Gold will provide additional information to Ms. Blezinger to share with members.
- Team is collecting data related to surveys, implementing services with a student and their family, number of referrals and where they're coming from, etc. Also looking at identifiers and strategies related specifically to the overall improvement of the student, both physically and mentally.
- The team will review the data, explore lessons learned, and develop success stories from this first project and determine how it can be expanded to other school districts and proceed to focus on the infrastructure statewide.
- The COVID pandemic has impacted the schools so the support by the mental health clinicians within the school is crucial. Working closely with school staff, looking at self-care for teachers or educators as well as provide caring resources and supportive resources for families is important factors. The use of the crisis evidence-based tools that are already in place and knowing that support is available is being utilized more than ever by counselors and school administrators.
- The state suicide prevention team helped DSHS implement and design trainings and webinars related to screening for suicide for primary care providers, and also worked with Child Mental Health Consortium and provided resources for them to share with pediatricians. The statewide suicide prevention team is available to conduct trainings and give presentations on suicide prevention.
- A presentation on simple screening techniques at the Texas Pediatric Society annual meeting would be a great opportunity to share information with pediatricians.

**Agenda Item 8: Public Comment**

No public comment was received for the meeting.

**Agenda Item 9: Adjourn the meeting**

Dr. Murthy called for additional notes or agenda topics for the next meeting.

- Dr. Booth mentioned future trainings. New members have recently joined the State Child Fatality Review Team and they've been involved with their local teams for a while. It would be nice to have some education and review to get members outside of their own disciplines.
- Dr. Murthy suggested it might be a good time to get the local teams to attend in person and give updates on what is going on in their area.

Dr. Murthy announced the next meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2022, and program staff will advise if there are any changes to the meeting format. He thanked Ms. Allen and Ms. Blezinger for their guidance, the members for their participation, and adjourned the meeting at 11:52 am.

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**To view and listen to the archived webcast of the SCFRT,  
February 18, 2022, meeting go to:**

<https://texashsc.new.swagit.com/videos/154854>

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