

Maternal Mortality Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC)

Friday, June 13, 2025

9:00 a.m.

FINAL APPROVED

Virtual: Teams Meeting Platform

In Person Meeting Site: Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

Robert D. Moreton Building

Room M-100, First Floor

1100 West 49th Street

Austin, TX 78756

Agenda Item 1: Call to order, roll call, and welcoming remarks

Dr. Carla Ortique called the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC) meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Ortique, Chair, welcomed all committee members, staff, team members, and the public attending. She acknowledged the work done by the committee is a critical part in the efforts to address maternal deaths and disparities. Dr. Ortique stressed that the work of the committee honors the lives of Texas women that have been lost during pregnancy, childbirth, and the year after. She requested a moment of silence in honor of the women as well as their families and communities that have been touched by the loss of a mother.

Dr. Ortique introduced Ms. Jessica Arevalo, HHSC, Advisory Committee Coordination Office (ACCO) to read logistical announcements, call roll and determine if a quorum was reached.

Ms. Arevalo proceeded with the meeting logistics and stated the meeting was being conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and conducted the roll call. Ms. Arevalo announced that with members present, quorum was met.

Table 1: The Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC) member attendance at the June 13, 2025 meeting.

Member Name	In Attendance
Dr. Meenakshi Awasthi	No
Dr. Meitra Doty	Yes
Dr. Carey Eppes	Yes
Dr. Kelly Fegan-Bohm	Yes

Member Name	In Attendance
Dr. Morna Gonsoulin	Yes
Dr. Angeline Opina Gonzalez	Yes
Dr. Manda Hall	Yes
Dr. Sarah Hartman	No
Dr. James Hill	No
Dr. Amy Raines Milenkov	Yes
Dr. Christina Murphy	Yes
Dr. Sherri Onyiego	Yes
Dr. Barbara Orlando	No
Dr. Carla Ortique	Yes
Dr. Diaa Osman	No
Dr. Robin Page	No
Dr. Lavannya Pandit	Yes
Ms. Nancy Puig	No
Dr. Patrick Ramsey	No
Dr. Avi Ruderman	Yes
Dr. Ingrid Skop	Yes
Dr. Lindsey Vasquez	Yes

Agenda Item 2: Consideration of March 7, 2025 draft meeting minutes

Dr. Ortique asked members if there were any edits or changes needed in the draft. No edits or changes were requested.

Motion: Dr. Kelly Fegan-Bohm motioned to approve the minutes as presented from the March 7, 2025 meeting. Dr. Avi Ruderman seconded. Dr. Ortique turned the floor over to Ms. Arevalo to proceed with a roll call vote, and the motion passed with fourteen approve (Eppes, Fegan-Bohm, Gonsoulin, Gonzales, Hall, Raines-Milenkov, Murphy, Onyiego, Ortique, Pandit, Ruderman, Skop, Vasquez, Doty), no disapprove, no abstain.

Agenda Item 3: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee chair and subcommittees updates

- Dr. Carla Ortique provided key updates on maternal health issues on the state and national levels. She discussed the upcoming DSHS MMMRC 2026 Joint Biennial Report and what that will entail for the committee. She then discussed recent public health matters.

Dr. Ortique turned the floor over to Dr. Sherri Onyiego, chair of the MMMRC subcommittee on Maternal Health Disparities.

Dr. Sherri Onyiego – Maternal Health Disparities

Dr. Onyiego thanked Dr. Ortique and acknowledged the leadership team at DSHS for their continued support.

- The subcommittee on Maternal Health Disparities had the following updates:
 - The subcommittee is monitoring health disparities that impact women in the state of Texas.
 - The subcommittee is tracking the use of the Discrimination Assessment Tool and Social Determinants of Health Tool that the MMMRC utilizes in order to identify opportunities for updates.
 - The subcommittee is continuing to work on the development a homicide tool that will be able to assist in case review of homicides related to pregnancy.

Dr. Carey Eppes – Research and Publications

Dr. Carey Eppes thanked Dr. Ortique and announced that she is presenting on behalf of the chair of the subcommittee, Dr. Robin Page.

- Dr. Eppes presented the following updates:
 - The subcommittee met recently to prioritize upcoming analyses that would lead to publications, with a focus on rural maternal communities in Texas.
 - The subcommittee worked on the timeline and prioritization of analyses in order to explore further identify patterns in maternal mortality in rural communities.

Dr. Carey Eppes asked Dr. Ortique if she could comment on the previous committee that explored COVID-19 related deaths and public health emergencies. Dr. Ortique gave permission.

- Dr. Carey Eppes provided the following comment:
 - Dr. Eppes reviewed the goals and findings from the previous COVID-19 subcommittee, now known as the Public Health Emergencies Subcommittee.

Agenda Item 4: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee team updates

Dr. Ortique opened the floor to committee members to share any team updates.

No updates were provided.

Agenda Item 5: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee Operational and Maternal Health and Safety Initiatives updates

Dr. Ortique acknowledged the work of the DSHS team. Dr. Ortique then turned the floor to Dr. Shruthi Arismendez, Unit Director of the Maternal and Child Health Program at DSHS. Dr. Arismendez provided updates on the following:

- Introduced new DSHS staff member Amy Tucker (Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Branch Manager).
- DSHS has provisionally identified 277 cases for 2021, and 131 cases for the first three quarters of 2024.
- DSHS plans to provide a more exhaustive rundown of the 89th legislation session in a future meeting.
- DSHS has continued to work on the Maternal Mortality Review System (MMRS). The new system is now accessible to behind-the-scenes DSHS staff. MMRS will be open to MMMRC members beginning on June 16th, 2025, and training will begin on June 18th, 2025.
- DSHS and the MMMRC are preparing for the next DSHS MMMRC Joint Biennial Report that will be published on September 1st, 2026.
- DSHS is collaborating with Texas Collaboration for Healthy Mothers and Babies (TCHMB) to implement Texas AIM Safety Bundles. The new Sepsis bundle has been launched. The Mental Health and Substance Use bundle is currently in the planning stages.
- The Hear Her Texas campaign continues promoting awareness of urgent maternal warning signs using several strategies, including an ongoing media campaign. The second round of the media campaign will go live in August 2025. The Hear Her Texas campaign is currently focusing efforts on developing messaging and educational materials for healthcare providers and the development of a campaign microsite.

Dr. Carla Ortique thanked Dr. Arismendez and turned the floor over to members for questions or comments.

Dr. Manda Hall added to the operational updates by sharing that Jeremy Tripplett is now serving as the Interim Deputy Commissioner of Program Operations for DSHS. His previous position, Deputy Commissioner for the Community Health Improvement Division, will be filled by Dr. Kelly Fegan-Bohm, who will serve as Interim Deputy Commissioner.

Agenda Item 6: Future Agenda Items

Dr. Ortique opened discussion for new business and potential agenda items for the next meeting scheduled for September 11, 2025.

Dr. Ortique acknowledged the presence of and welcomed Representative Donna Howard.

Agenda Item 7: Public Comment

Ms. Arevalo, ACCO Facilitator, read the public comment announcement and coordinated with the ACCO production team for requests from stakeholders who registered prior to the meeting or were on-site to provide public comment.

Oral public comment –

- **Representative Donna Howard**
 - Provided comments on recently passed legislation including House Bill 713, House Bill 37, House Bill 136, and Senate Bill 31.
 - Provided further comments on Dr. Ortique's chair update.
- The following commentators expressed concerns regarding MMMRC processes.
 - Ms. Emma Wake.
 - Ms. Dinah Warranch
 - Ms. Serita Fontanesi

Agenda Item 8: Executive session: to review cases under Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 34. Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee, Section 34.007. Selection and Review of Cases as authorized by Section 34.004.

Dr. Ortique stated that executive session will not occur on this day.

Agenda Item 9: Adjourn

Dr. Ortique stated with no further business or discussion she would adjourn the meeting at 10:12am.

Below is the link to the archived video of the June 13, 2025, Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC) that will be available for viewing approximately two years from date meeting was posted on website and based on the DSHS records retention schedule.

[Jun 13, 2025 Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee - Texas Health and Human Services Commission](#)