
Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC)

Friday, June 18, 2024

8:30 a.m.

FINAL APPROVED

Virtual: Teams Meeting Platform

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

Robert Bernstein Building

Room K-100, First Floor

1100 West 49th Street

Austin, Texas 78756

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

Dr. Carla Ortique, Chair, called the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Dr. Ortique, Chair, welcomed all committee members, staff, team members, and the public attending. Dr. Ortique introduced new committee members and described their respective roles. She acknowledged the work done by the committee is a critical part in the efforts to address maternal deaths and disparities. Dr. Ortique stressed the works honor the lives that have been lost of Texas women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the year after and 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 and call roll and determined if a quorum was reached.

Ms. Arevalo then 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: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee member attendance at the Friday June 18, 2024, meeting.

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

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

Agenda Item 2: Consideration of March 22, 2024, draft meeting minutes

Dr. Ortique turned the floor over to Ms. Arevalo to proceed with the consideration of the March 22 draft minutes. Ms. Arevalo asked members if there were any edits or changes needed in the draft. Dr. James Hill requested to correct the minutes to indicate that he was present at the March 22 meeting. Ms. Arevalo requested to change the motion to include the correction.

Motion:

Dr. Robin Page motioned to approve the corrected minutes, Dr. Patrick Ramsey seconded. Ms. Arevalo conducted a role call vote, and the motion passed with sixteen approve (Fegan-Bohm, Doty, Eppes, Gonsoulin, Gonzalez, Hall, Hartman, Hill, Murphey, Orlando, Ortique, Page, Milenkov, Ramsey, Ruderman, Skop), no disapprove, no abstain. Ms. Arevalo turned the floor back to Dr. Ortique to move to agenda item number 3.

Agenda Item 3: Maternal and Child Health Data Modernization Efforts Presentation

Dr. Ortique introduced Dr. Jennifer Shuford, DSHS Commissioner.

Dr. Shuford presented "Improving the Availability of Maternal and Child Health Data." The presentation covered the following material:

- Reviewed the responsibilities of DSHS as described in Texas statute.
- DSHS received funding from the 88th Legislature for data modernization to support legislatively mandated programs and activities, with a goal of improving overall maternal and infant health outcomes.
- DSHS is continuing to improve Texas Health Data site that allows users to interact with data sets from across the agency.
- DSHS has launched a Maternal and Child Health Dashboard. The data for the dashboard comes from the Healthy Texas Mothers Babies Data Book, Vital Event Data, and Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data.
- Dr. Shuford provided a live demonstration and overview of the Maternal and Child Health Dashboard.
- Reviewed the next steps in the continuous development the Maternal and Child Health Dashboard. Next steps include integrating data analysis from the MMMRC and DSHS Joint Biennial Report into the Maternal and Child Health Dashboard so that this data is more readily available. Congenital syphilis data is planned to be integrated into the Maternal and Child Health Dashboard by the end of 2024.

Dr. Ortique thanked Dr. Shuford. Dr. Ortique then opened the floor to committee members for questions and/or comments.

Dr. Patrick Ramsey thanked the DSHS team for their work. Dr. Ramsey noted that specific data regarding public health regions for maternal and neonatal data would be helpful to include in the dashboard. Dr. Ramsey also noted a need for clarity regarding time frame in which data was collected.

Dr. Barbara Orlando thanked the DSHS team for their work. Dr. Orlando asked for the DSHS team to share to the link to the Maternal and Child Health Dashboard. Dr. Orlando then referenced a higher rate of Intrauterine Growth Restriction (IUGR) in non-Hispanic Black communities and voiced that it would be helpful to see the correlation between IUGR and preeclampsia in varying populations.

Dr. Shuford ensured that the members will receive the link to the Maternal and Child Health Dashboard. Dr. Shuford expressed that DSHS is limited in the data able to be collected and referred the question to Dr. Manda Hall.

Dr. Hall echoed Dr. Shuford's sentiment that the data might be limited, however she stated that is something that can be discussed with the Epidemiology team.

Dr. Robin Page thanked the DSHS team for their work. Dr. Page asked Dr. Shuford how the data from the new dashboard can be integrated into the MMRIA system.

Dr. Shuford referred the question to Dr. Hall.

Dr. Manda Hall stated that the DSHS team is in the process of developing a new system that will support the review committee. Dr. Hall explained that the DSHS team is currently exploring opportunities for how this data can be shared with the MMRIA system.

Agenda Item 4: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee Operation and Maternal Health and Safety Initiatives Updates

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

- The DSHS team is currently developing the Joint Biennial Legislative Report, which is due on September 1st, 2024. DSHS team is working closely with the MMMRC to integrate the recommendations from the committee into the report.
- The MMMRC has now completed the 2020 Case Cohort Review. Review of the 2021 Case Cohort will begin in September of 2024.
- DSHS is considering options to improving accuracy and quality of death certificates. Maternal and Child Health Section continues quality improvement processes.
- DSHS is continuing to work on TexasAIM initiatives, with a focus on severe hypertension pregnancy.

Agenda Item 5: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee Chair and Subcommittee Updates and Motions

Dr. Carla Ortique – Chair Update

Dr. Ortique provided the following:

- Dr. Ortique thanked Dr. Shuford, Dr. Hall, and Mr. Jeremy Triplett for the opportunity to serve as chair of the Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee.
- Details around her trip to the MMRIA User Meeting (MUM) with Dr. Patrick Ramsey.
- The DSHS team collaborated with Dr. Patrick Ramsey and Dr. Carey Eppes to author and develop a poster presentation that was presented during the MUM meeting. Dr. Ortique commended the work done by all parties involved and highlighted the success of the poster.
- Discussed importance of continuing to incorporate the use of the MMMRIA system even as the Texas MMMRC transitions to the Texas Data System.
- Thanked the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center (UNTHSC) Redaction and Abstraction Team, as well as the DSHS team and the MMMRC members.
- Acknowledged the previous days closed session where the members developed recommendations for the upcoming Joint MMMRC Biennial Report based on the 2020 case cohort.
- Thanked and acknowledged past MMMRC members Dr. Eumenia Castro and Nakeenya Wilson for their past work.

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- Discussed the significant media coverage following the agency’s press release regarding the 2024 member appointments. Dr. Ortique reminded members of the importance of the scientific process as well as the importance of embracing diversity among members of the committee.

Dr. Ortique turned the floor over to Dr. James Hill, MD, Member, MMMRC Subcommittee on Maternal Health Disparities member.

Dr. James Hill – Maternal Health Disparities

Dr. James Hill provided the following:

- A brief review of the purpose of the Maternal Health Disparities Subcommittee.
- The subcommittee is working on the following:
 - Data analysis and trends related to maternal mortality and morbidity.
 - Discrimination Assessment and Social Determinants of Health (DASH) Tool pilot study.
 - Development of the homicide tool.
 - Activities related to the refinement of the DASH Tool.
- Thanked Dr. Amy Raines-Milenkov on her leadership regarding the DASH Tool refinement and Dr. Fegan-Bohm on her leadership for the development of the homicide tool.

Dr. Hill turned the floor back over to Dr. Carla Ortique.

Dr. Ortique thanked Dr. Hill. Dr. Ortique then introduced Dr. Catherine Eppes, MD, Member, Subcommittee on COVID-19 Chair to provide members with updates.

Dr. Catherine Eppes – Subcommittee on Public Health Emergencies

Dr. Eppes provided the following:

- The subcommittee is focused on the upcoming 2024 MMMRC and DSHS Joint Biennial Report. The recommendations being developed by the committee and subcommittee will reflect lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and the direct and indirect impacts on maternal mortality.
- Thanked case abstractors at the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center.
- Acknowledged and thanked committee members that were overwhelmed by duties during the COVID-19 pandemic for their hard work and acknowledged the hardships that came with the increased responsibilities.

Dr. Ortique thanked Dr. Eppes. Dr. Ortique opened the floor to members for comments or questions on the Chair and Subcommittee Updates. No members responded for comments or questions.

Dr. Ortique thanked the subcommittees and highlighted the importance of their work on a national level.

Dr. Ortique turned the floor to Dr. Patrick Ramsey, Vice Chair, to propose a new subcommittee. Dr. Ortique reminded members that adopting a new subcommittee would

mean sunseting the Public Health Emergency subcommittee. Dr. Ortique established that the Public Health Emergency subcommittee could be reactivated at any time in the future in the case of a public health emergency.

Dr. Patrick Ramsey – Proposal of Subcommittee on Research and Publication

Dr. Ramsey discussed the recent publications from the Texas MMMRC and the significant impact these publications have had. He highlighted the opportunity for future publications to share maternal mortality and morbidity data on a national level.

Dr. Ramsey proposed the formation of a Subcommittee on Research and Publication. The purpose of the subcommittee would be as follows:

- To develop processes and identify opportunities for scholarly research and publication on behalf of the Texas MMMRC to facilitate dissemination of knowledge to the larger community of MMMRC's and the greater scientific community.

Dr. Ramsey stated that the goals of the committee would be the following:

1. Identify existing processes or tools used by the MMMRC that may represent opportunities for knowledge dissemination.
2. Develop processes and pathways to validate processes or tools used by the MMMRC and develop pathways to publication of the related work.
3. Create processes and pathways to share unique knowledge from MMMRC case reviews as allowable by state statute to result in dissemination and publication of related work.

MOTION:

Dr. Ramsey requested a motion to sunset the Public Health Emergency subcommittee and establish the Research and Publication Subcommittee. Dr. Robin Page seconded.

Dr. Ortique turned the floor to Jessica Arevalo to conduct a vote on the motion. Ms. Arevalo conducted a vote and the motion passed with seventeen approve (Fegan-Bohm, Doty, Eppes, Gonsoulin, Hall, Hill, Murphey, Orlando, Ortique, Page, Raines-Milenkov, Ramsey, Ruderman, Skop, Vasquez, Gonzalez, Hartman), no disapprove, no abstain. Ms. Arevalo turned the floor back to Dr. Ortique to move to agenda item six.

Agenda Item 6: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee Team Updates

Dr. Ortique gave an opportunity to any of the team members to report to the members on information they might want to present including the successes and challenges in their team meetings.

- Dr. Catherine Eppes, Team 2, discussed:
 - Acknowledged and thanked former MMMRC members Dr. Eumenia Castro and Nakeenya Wilson on behalf of Team 2 for their contributions to the MMMRC.
- Dr. Patrick Ramsey, Team 3, discussed:

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- Shared that Team 3 had discussed that the existing process to assess for discrimination in cases could be improved upon.
 - Dr. Manda Hall, Team 4, discussed:
 - Acknowledged and thanked the MMMRC members for meeting in May to complete the 2020 case cohort.
 - Welcomed new committee members and thanked the DSHS team.
 - Dr. James Hill, Team 1, discussed:
 - Shared that the presence of a psychiatrist on Team 1 has provided valuable insight, particularly in cases involving mental health disorders.

Agenda Item 8: Future Agenda Items

Dr. Ortique explained the process of adding agenda items to future meetings to new members. Dr. Ortique then opened discussion for new business and potential agenda items for the next meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 26, 2024.

- Dr. Manda Hall, Committee Member, proposed that the MMMRC findings and recommendations be presented at the Thursday September 26, 2024, meeting agenda.
- Dr. Ramsey, Co-Chair, suggested that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) could present their national data findings at the Thursday September 26, 2024 meeting.

Agenda Item 7: Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies (TCHMB): The Texas Perinatal Quality Collaborative Presentation

Agenda item 7 was skipped and returned to after Agenda Item 8.

Dr. Ortique turned the floor to Dr. Alice Gong, Vice Chair of Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies (TCHMB).

Dr. Gong's presentation covered the following:

- TCHMB's mission, goals, and strategies.
- Description, purpose, and goals of a State Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PQC).
- TCHMB's partnership with Regional Advisory Council (RAC) that increases regional engagement with initiatives.
- TCHMB's current initiatives, which include:
 - Neonatal Admission Temperature (NAT) Project
 - Recognition and Response to Postpartum Preeclampsia in the Emergency Department (PPED) Project
- Information regarding how to get involved with the TCHMB.

Dr. Ortique asked Dr. Gong to share any insights she might have on how health-care deserts impact health outcomes, particularly regarding TCHMB. Dr. Gong referenced the heat map on slide twenty-one to address the need for equitable distribution of health care in Texas.

Dr. Ortique thanked Dr. Gong for her presentation.

Agenda Item 9: Public Comment

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

Oral public comment –

- **Ms. Dinah Waranch, Representative of the Consortium of Texas Nurse Midwives and the Coalition of Texas Birth Centers.**
 - Need for bold recommendations that support the midwifery workforce in order to address maternal mortality.
 - Importance of looking to international maternal care health policies for guidance.

Agenda Item 10: 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 read the legislation allowing the Review Committee to move into a closed executive session.

She announced the committee will go into closed session at 11am.

The committee will return later in the afternoon to reopen the meeting from closed to open session before adjourning for the day, as statutorily required. There will be a break to allow for room turnover and the committee will resume their meeting, in closed session.

Ms. Arevalo announced to members of the public that this concluded the open meeting for the morning and the public was informed that the review committee would return later in the afternoon to open the closed session and then adjourn.

Agenda Item 11: Adjournment and Thank You

Dr. Ortique reopened the meeting at 12:46pm and stated with no further business or discussion she would adjourn the meeting at 12:47pm.

Below is the link to the archived video recording of June 18, 2024, 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.

[Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee \(MMMRC\) June 18, 2024.](#)