

MEETING MINUTES
ST. MARY'S COUNTY FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY – JANUARY 28, 2015
ROOM 14 POTOMAC BUILDING * LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND

CALL TO ORDER – The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. (This is a recorded meeting)

ROLL CALL – Members present were Laura Joyce – Chair, Ashely Croyle – Vice Chair, Kimberly Gregory, Yvonne Dawkins, Buffy Giddens, Elizabeth Servello, Kathleen Lacer, Judge Karen Abrams, Kaya Daley on behalf of Dr. Kathy O'Brien, and Ella May Russell.

Members who did not attend and were excused were Reverend Sherrill Page and Libby Blair.

Staff members present were Amber Hebert – Office Manager for the Department of Aging and Human Services.

OTHER ATTENDEES – Deb Gethiny, Jason DuBard, Domestic Violence Coordinator Douglas Harris, and Kathie Raley.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – Motion to approve the October 29, 2014 minutes was made by Ms. Croyle and seconded by Ms. Gregory, the motion passed.

STATUS REPORTS –

- Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) – The hospital had 9 sexual assault cases since October and the DV camera is being used for cases and working well.
- Child Advocacy – Ms. Russell shared statistics from the Child Advocacy Center – for the 4th quarter there were 72 physical assault cases, 113 physical assault cases, and 65 referred for alternative response.
- Lethality Assessment Program – The program is going well and there has been 85 assessments completed with 46 referrals to Walden Sierra for services.

COMMITTEE UPDATES –

- Multidisciplinary Team – The committee continues to meet every two weeks.
- Education and Social Media – No update. Looking for additional members for the committee.
- Fatality Review – Ms. Green is working on the write-up from the Fatality Review in October.

DISCUSSION OF OLD BUSINESS –

- The council determined their quarterly meeting dates for 2015 which are January 28th, April 22nd, July 22nd, and October 28th.
- Flow Chart – Ms. Joyce collected the forms completed by the agencies and will have the chart ready for the April meeting.

DISCUSSION OF NEW BUSINESS –

- Legislative Agenda 2015 – Ms. Joyce stated there are several DV related bills going through the legislature and will have an update at the April meeting. Bills of interest:
 - HB 225/SB 269 Domestic Violence – Additional Relief. This bill expands the relief available in a final protective order by authorizing a judge to order “any other relief that a judge determines is necessary to protect a person eligible for relief from abuse.” This change in the law will provide greater protection and flexibility than is currently available and address the individual needs and circumstances of victims and their families.
 - HB 224/SB 315 Domestic Violence – 2-Year Protective Order. Clarifies that extensions of protective orders applies to consent orders.
 - HB 606/SB 477 Domestic Violence – Persons Eligible for Relief. This bill expands the “persons eligible for relief” in the protective order statute to include “an individual who has had a sexual relationship with the respondent within 1 year before filing of the petition.” This provides more protection for victims/survivors of sex crimes and dating violence by moving these cases from the peace order to the protective order.
 - HB 227 Family Law – Domestic Violence – Definition of Abuse. This bill would have altered the definition of “abuse” in the protective order to include harassment, trespass, and malicious destruction of property if the person eligible for relief had not resided with the respondent for at least 7 days before the filing of the petition.
 - HB 263 Domestic Violence – Permanent Protective Orders – Conspiracy or Solicitation to Commit Murder. This bill expands the circumstances under which a court is required to issue a permanent final protective order to include the conviction of an individual for conspiracy or solicitation to commit murder.
 - SB 270/HB 390 Protective Order and Peace Order Petitions – Maryland Residents. This bill authorizes the filing of a protective or peace order petition if the abuse is alleged to have occurred in the State or if the person eligible for relief is a resident of the State, regardless of whether the alleged abuse occurred in the state.
 - SB 277/HB 807 Family Law – Protective Orders – Additional Relief. This bill would have authorized a judge in a final protective order to order the respondent to remain a specified distance away from the residence, place of employment, school, or temporary residence of a person eligible for relief. Note: this bill only related to distance and was narrower than HB 225/SB 269 Domestic Violence – Additional Relief.
 - SB 530/HB 857 Criminal Procedure – Firearms – Transfer. This bill would require the court to order a person who is convicted of a crime of violence that is a misdemeanor “domestically related crime” to transfer all firearms owned by the person or in the person’s possession. The transfer of firearms must be made within 24 hours of the conviction to a state or local law enforcement official or to a federally licensed firearms dealer with notification to the court.
 - HB 165 Family Law – Grounds for Limited Divorce. This bill changes the grounds for a limited divorce to enable people who are living separate and apart to file for a limited divorce. Current law requires that the separation of the parties be voluntary and without a reasonable expectation of reconciliation.
 - HB 1083/SB 550 Legal Decision Making and Parenting Time. This bill was based on the recommendations of the Commission on Child Custody Decision-Making, which

issued its final report in December 2014. The bill would have codified in statute a list of factors which the court must consider in making custody and visitation decisions in the “best interest of the child.” There would be no presumption of joint custody, and each custody case would be evaluated based on the particular facts and circumstances of the case.

- SB 40/HB 385 Labor and Employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act. This bill would have allowed workers to earn annual paid sick and safe days, up to seven days per year. The safe time component required employers to allow victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault to use their accrued paid sick leave to care for their health after these incidents or to seek legal protections or new housing. A very important bill for working families since 41% of American workers – and 80% of low wage workers – do not earn paid sick days.
- SB 74/HB 739 Task Force to Study Maternal Mental Health. This bill establishes a Task Force to Study Maternal Mental Health. Because women who have had a history of physical abuse during pregnancy or the year prior to pregnancy reported nearly three times the prevalence of post-partum depression, domestic violence is an important component of this study. The MNADV will have a representative on the Task Force.
- SB 650/HB 888 Family Law – Rebuttable Presumption of Joint Custody. This bill would establish that joint legal custody or shared physical custody are presumed to be in the best interest of the child. However, in hotly contested custody disputes, “equal parenting time” and “joint legal custody” may be in direct opposition to the best interest of the child. Forcing this model in certain families will specifically hinder the healthy development of children who must deal with parents who are constantly engaged in conflict. In cases of domestic violence, joint legal and shared physical custody is nearly always inappropriate.

ANNOUNCEMENTS –

- On Saturday, June 6, 2015 from noon to 6:00 p.m., the new Stoney's at Clark's Landing will be the site of the 2nd Annual Rubber Ducky Invitational Bathtub Races. If you're one of the 500+ who attended last year, you know that this is one of the wildest, wackiest traditions in racing. Souped-up bathtubs will go drain-to-drain in the waters surrounding Clark's Landing, racing for the finish line. The event features three engine categories (8 hp, 15 hp and 25 hp) and competitions in design, most sponsorships and other categories. The races benefit the Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy, with proceeds going directly to providing court advocacy and legal representation to victims of domestic violence in Southern Maryland. The Center is a 501 (c) 3 and has been providing legal and related services to victims of dating and domestic violence, stalking and sexual violence for 36 years.

NEXT MEETING –

- The next meeting is April 22, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 14 in the Potomac Building.

ADJOURNMENT –

- The council adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.