

FLORIDA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW E-NEWSLETTER

Number 4 June 2009

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has received an award from the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program, administered by the Department of Justice, to partner with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) to create a statewide domestic violence fatality review team. The two year grant will enable the statewide team to meet four times and to sponsor two statewide fatality review training institutes for local fatality review teams and other members of the community.

First Fatality Review Training Institute A Success!

Dr. Neil Websdale and Matthew Dale, national experts on domestic violence fatality review, conducted a one-day training on domestic violence fatality review on April 6, 2009, in Jacksonville, Florida. Dr. Websdale, Professor of Criminal Justice at Northern Arizona University and Principal Project Advisor to and former Director of the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative, and Mr. Dale, director of the Montana Department of Justice's Office of Consumer Protection and Victim Services, presented to over 70 attendees representing local fatality review teams, domestic violence centers, law enforcement, criminal justice personnel, child welfare workers, and health and family service providers. Topics included current national trends in domestic violence fatality review, and attendees participated in mock fatality reviews of case studies based on actual domestic violence homicides.

University of Florida's Dr. Nancy S. Hardt Presented Research to the Statewide Fatality Review Team

The statewide fatality review team held its third meeting on April 6, 2009 in Jacksonville. Fourteen members attended. Dr. Nancy S. Hardt, Professor of Pathology and Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Florida College of Medicine, presented her research on maternal death due to trauma in Florida, and its relationship to domestic violence fatalities. Her presentation resulted in much discussion among team members regarding the types of data that may be helpful to fatality reviews, and possible future collaborations.

Save the Dates

The second DCF/ FCADV Fatality Review Training Institute is set for Friday, August 21, 2009, from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm at the Harbor Beach Marriott Resort, 3030 Holiday Drive, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The Office of State Court Administration (OSCA) hopes to co-sponsor this training. Dr. Neil Websdale and Matthew Dale will conduct the identical training held in Jacksonville in April. Topics will include current national trends in domestic violence fatality review, and attendees will participate in mock fatality reviews based on actual cases. Registration information will be posted on the Fatality Review Webpage in FCADV's website, <http://www.fcadv.org/projects-fatality.php>.

The final meeting of the Statewide Fatality Review Team is set for Thursday, August 20, from 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm, at the Harbor Beach Marriott Resort in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Local Fatality Review Teams Respond to Survey

The following are the results of a survey regarding the recent activity of and types of cases reviewed by local fatality review teams in Florida during 2008-2009. DCF and FCADV acknowledge the hard work of and critical role played by these local fatality review teams. Thanks to all local teams that responded to this survey.

Brevard County's team reviews homicides and homicide-suicides. The team reviewed three cases in 2008 and one thus far in 2009.

Broward County's team reviewed two murder-suicides in 2008. The team reviews homicide-suicides and homicide-near death cases.

Duval County reviews homicides and homicide-suicides of intimate partners. The team reviewed 10 cases in 2008.

Hillsborough County's team reviews intimate partner homicides. The team reviewed four cases in 2008 and four cases thus far in 2009.

Miami-Dade County reviews approximately two cases per month and reviews the following types of cases:

- Familiar DV-Related Deaths
- Sexual Competitors
- Mercy Killing
- DV-Related Suicides
- DV-Related Near Death Victims
- Child Abuse/Neglect Deaths

Palm Beach County reviewed 4 homicide-suicide cases. The team reviews the following types of cases in attempt to address the question of intervention precluding serious injury or death such as:

- Near Fatal/Attempt Murder
- Domestic/Intimate Partner
- Same Sex/Significant Other
- Dating Relationships – Aggravated Battery/Attempt Murder
- Presentation of some Domestic Homicides perpetrated outside of the County

Pasco County reviews homicide-suicides, suicide-near-death, and cases where the perpetrator attacked the child or attacked the victim's new partner.

Pinellas County conducted 6 reviews in 2008 and 20 reviews so far in 2009. The team reviews intimate partner near fatalities, intimate partner homicide/suicide; multiple intimate partner and

children homicide/suicide (the perpetrator killed woman, her new partner, the two children, and then himself), and intimate partner homicides.

Polk/Highlands Counties reviewed three cases: an intimate partner homicide, a murder suicide, and a case where an ex-girlfriend and her new boyfriend killed ex-boyfriend; the ex-girlfriend and ex-boyfriend have a child in common.

Santa Rosa County is in the process of separating from the joint team for Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, and plans to review its first case this October 2009. The team will focus on fatalities and near death or death/suicides cases only.

Seminole County plans to meet in June 2009 and then again in September with the intent of meeting quarterly. The team will be reviewing the nine domestic violence homicides that occurred in 2008.

Alachua, Sarasota/Manatee and St. John's Counties are in the process of forming/reactivating their fatality review teams and determining the types of cases they will review.

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Attached is a May 24, 2009 article from the Palm Beach Post, "[State surge in child slayings may be another product of the recession](#)" that discusses domestic violence fatalities.

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This project was supported by Grant No. 2007-WE-AX-0055 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women or the Florida Department of Children and Families.