

**MICHIGAN DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
PREVENTION AND TREATMENT BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 8, 2024**

**\*\*\* Approved \*\*\***

**Members Present:**

Dr. NiCole Buchanan  
Hon. Elizabeth Pollard Hines – Chairperson  
Hon. Melissa Pope - conference line (AG Opinion No. 7318). Will be counted as quorum.  
Rebecca Shiemke  
Matt Wiese  
Kyla Williams

**Members Absent with Notice:**

Kristen Howard

**Staff Present:**

Jess Averill  
Tonya Avery  
Michael Bobbitt, Board Secretary  
Jordan Kennedy  
Gail Krieger  
Beth Nagel  
Angela Povilaitis  
Lore Rogers

**Guests:**

Stephanie Beyersdorf - State Court Administrator Office  
Heath Lowry - Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Sandra Pilgrim-Lewis - Uniting Three Fires Against Violence  
Cheree Thomas - Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Felicity Tyll - PPO - Ingham County  
Margaret Yellin - Deaf CAN  
Merkeb Yohannes - Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

E. Hines convened the March 8, 2024 Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board meeting at the Grand Tower Building, Dempsey Room in Lansing, Michigan at 1:05 p.m.

**BOARD CONSENT**

Review of March 8, 2024 agenda and approval of February 9, 2024 meeting minutes.

**MOTION: Moved by K. Williams to approve the March 8, 2024 agenda. Motion seconded by N. Buchanan. Motion carried.**

**MOTION: Moved by M. Wiese to approve the February 9, 2024 meeting minutes as amended. Motion seconded by N. Buchanan Motion carried.**

## CHAIR REPORT

- Dr. Kyla Williams provided a presentation on her PhD dissertation research titled “Understanding the Formal Help-Seeking Experiences of Gay Men who have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic”. Dr. Williams concluded that in her research she found three emergent themes:
  - Discrimination towards gay men by law enforcement officers
  - Lack of resources (shelters, support groups, information about IPV) for gay men and training for law enforcement (how to address gay men as victims, where to seek resources)
  - Negative attitude towards law enforcement officers by the participants (dislike and distrust)The following are Dr. Williams’ recommendations
  - Human Service Practice
    - Community roundtable discussions
    - Sensitivity training
    - Statewide training w/ law enforcement certification
  - Future Research
    - Law enforcement response
    - Training (trauma informed, intersectional, culturally specific)
    - Tailored intervention

She also provided the following thoughts:

- IPV is a crime affecting gay men at alarming rates
- Characteristics such as stigma, discrimination, sexual orientation, lack of resources and training etc. impact how human services are tailored (or lack) towards gay men in IPV relationships
- Law enforcement officers do not have a clear and concise understanding of dynamics of IPV and gay men. Understanding the challenges of marginalized groups can help improve response and meet the group’s needs
- Law enforcement lacks knowledge on how to address IPV in marginalized groups

E. Hines said the PPO subcommittee looking at no cost service for petitioners has met a few times to review draft language.

The subcommittee reviewing the medical mandated reporting statute will meet for the first-time next week.

The April 12<sup>th</sup> board meeting will be held at Avalon Healing Center in Detroit. During the meeting Kimberly Hurst, founder and CEO of Avalon Healing Center and Kalimah Johnson, founder and Director of SASHA Center will both be awarded the 2024 Debi Cain Champion of Justice Award.

A Crime Victim Vigil will be held on April 17<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. The vigil will be held at the State of Michigan Library and Historical Center.

Today is K. Howard’s last Board meeting but she was unable to attend. The Board is sad to lose her but wish her the best with her new out-of-state job. Her unique expertise, graceful demeanor, and passion for helping victims and survivors will be greatly missed. The Governor will be making a new appointment to the board to replace her.

## **STAFF REPORT**

G. Krieger said L. Rogers will be retiring at the end of June. Lynelle Morgan has been recruited and hired as a new staff attorney who will be taking on some of Lore's workload. She is currently an attorney at the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence.

J. Kennedy spoke about the Sexual Assault Hotline Media Campaign that ran from April through September 2023. The objective was to increase statewide awareness of sexual assault and increase the hotline call, text and chat volume. Between April 1 and September 30, 2023, there were 1,387 calls, 935 chats and 467 texts for a total of 2790 total contacts with the hotline.

Staff member Sarah Heuser provided a presentation on Safe & Together work in Michigan. She covered the history of this initiative and shared the current status. A project is in development that would involve staff from MDHHS Children's Services Administration, four counties, and DVS working with staff from the Safe & Together Institute to implement a comprehensive effort in Kalamazoo, Saginaw, Traverse City, and Washtenaw Counties. The goal is to root the implementation of Safe & Together based practice to improve outcomes for families.

## **LEGISLATIVE REVIEW**

The Board reviewed Draft 3 02904'23 and Draft 1 05356'24, sponsored by Sen. Klinefelt that would amend the penal code and the Sex Offender Registration Act (SORA) to criminalize and provide penalties for sexual contact and sexual penetration of a dead human body. Draft bill 3 02904'23 has a penalty of 15 years for an act of sexual penetration with a dead human body and two years for an act of sexual contact with a dead human body. The bill also provides that a court may order any sentence run consecutive to any other criminal penalty.

These draft bills would provide a criminal penalty equal to but not greater than a sexual assault or sexual touching committed against a live victim. Draft 05356'24 would amend the Sex Offender Registration Act to add the crimes outlined in Draft 3 02904'23 to those crimes where a conviction requires registration on the sex offender registry. Staff recommend adding the new crimes of "sexual contact and sexual penetration of a dead human body" to the felony murder statute, MCL 750.316(1)(b).

**MOTION: Moved by R. Shiemke to support Draft 3 02904'23 and Draft 1 05356'24 and recommend adding the new crime of sexual penetration of a dead body to the felony murder statute. Motion seconded by K. Williams. Motion carried.**

HB 5410-5412 would amend the Penal Code to add the crime of "sexual contact or sexual penetration with a human corpse" to the existing penal code section which criminalizes bestiality and sodomy. HB 5410 would amend the current penal code identified as "Crime Against Nature and Sodomy" by editing the title of the code to "Bestiality or Sexual Conduct Upon Human Corpse". HB 5410 also deletes the language criminalizing the act of sodomy between people and adds language in the same section in addition to bestiality, to criminalize sexual contact or sexual penetration upon a human corpse. The penalty for either crime is a 15-year felony.

The crimes of bestiality and necrophilia are very different offenses and should not be included in the same section of the Penal Code. Staff recommend opposing HB 5410-5412 as introduced but would move to support if the crimes of bestiality and sexual contact or sexual penetration upon a human corpse are separated into two separate penal code sections so that perpetrating sexual conduct on a human corpse is not seen as equivalent to bestiality.

**MOTION: Moved by R. Shiemke to oppose 5410-5412 as introduced but move to support if the crimes of bestiality and sexual contact or sexual penetration of a human corpse are separated into a separate bill and separate penal code sections. Motion seconded by K. Williams. Motion carried.**

A. Povilaitis gave an update on HB 5300 regarding name change. Staff met the bill sponsor, Rep. Pohutsky, to discuss the Board's position and recommendations. Rep. Pohutsky was receptive to many of the Board's concerns. Staff will continue to update the Board as this bill moves.

An update was provided for HB 5148 and 5149 regarding adult adoptees. Staff submitted a card of opposition. Staff were able to meet with bill the sponsor, Rep. Grant, to express the Board's concerns with this bill. The representative was understanding of the Board's concerns and of the impact these bills would have on sexual assault and domestic violence survivors. The bill is currently in the Senate committee.

**MOTION: Moved by M. Wiese that Board members acknowledged they had an opportunity to review the House and Senate bills of interest to the Board's constituency that had been introduced since the February 9, 2024, Board meeting. Motion seconded by R. Shiemke. Motion carried.**

#### **BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS**

M. Wiese said Marquette County received its first two extreme risk protection order requests in the last two weeks. They both went well but there is concern about the 24-hour window to surrender guns to police or to a licensed firearms dealer (which the Board addressed as an original concern with the legislation).

M. Pope said she will be speaking to the board about May 5<sup>th</sup> as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Day. She will bring information about a rally being hosted in Grand Rapids on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. S. Pilgrim Lewis will be one of the speakers at the rally.

M. Pope was invited to speak at a event being hosted by the International Development Model Organization with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Government of the Philippines in collaboration with the Stand for Her Land Campaign on the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women with the United Nations. She is very honored they included indigenous women of the United States in this event.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

S. Pilgrim Lewis said S. Ettawageshik was hired as the new Executive Director at Uniting Three Fires Against Violence (UTFAV).

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION: Moved by N. Buchanan to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by R. Shiemke. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 3:15 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by  
Michael Bobbitt  
Board Secretary