

**MICHIGAN DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE
PREVENTION AND TREATMENT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
September 13, 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
Megan Widman
Hon. Matt Wiese
Dr. Kyla Williams - conference line (AG Opinion No. 7318). Will be counted as quorum.

Members Absent with Notice:

Staff Present:

Jess Averill
Shalonna Banks
Michael Bobbitt, Board Secretary
Angelita Gunn
Jordan Kennedy
Gail Krieger
Tiffany Martinez
Elizabeth Moon Carter
Lynelle Morgan
Beth Nagel

Guests:

Stephanie Beyersdorf - State Court Administrator Office
Calisha Ford - Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
Stacey Ettawageshik - Uniting Three Fires Against Violence – Via Teams
Ashley Forward
Sheryl Forward
Brenda Dzierzawski - OV/Turning Point
Mary Lovik
Cori Spickler - MDOC
Brenne Wade - Forensic Nurse
Chéree Thomas - Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

E. Hines convened the September 13, 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 September 13, 2024, agenda and approval of June 14, 2024 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Moved by R. Shiemke to approve the September 13, 2024 agenda. Motion seconded by N. Buchanan. Motion carried.

MOTION: Moved by M. Widman to approve the June 14, 2024 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by R. Shiemke. Motion carried.

CHAIR REPORT

E. Hines acknowledged A. Povilaitis received an invitation to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in Washington D.C. She was invited to a celebration at the White House by the President and Dr. Biden, as well as an Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) event to commemorate this special anniversary. In recognizing the 30th anniversary of VAWA it provides an opportunity not only to reflect on the achievements and progress made, but also to reaffirm the Board's collective commitment to the ongoing work that remains to be done to enhance the coordinated community and federal responses to domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, and other interconnected forms of gender-based violence. The Board is proud of A. Povilaitis's work and dedication to receive this special invitation. She will represent the Board well and provide updates at next month's meeting.

E. Hines announced that Governor Whitmer appointed G. Krieger to the new Michigan Gun Violence Prevention Task Force. This taskforce was created by Executive Order 2024-4 and is housed within the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). The task force is charged with identifying the root causes of gun violence, compiling reports and relevant data, maximizing existing resources, soliciting perspectives from diverse stakeholders, and recommending policy to save lives. The group is comprised of members reflecting a wide range of stakeholders including state department directors, medical experts, law enforcement professionals, tribal representatives, and more. G. Krieger will represent the Board well on the taskforce which will be very impactful.

M. Pope was congratulated by E. Hines for being reappointed to the Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Michigan Judiciary, serving on behalf of the Michigan Tribal State and Federal Judicial Forum. She thanked M. Pope for her service to this group.

C. Thomas and C. Ford from the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence provided an update on the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Hotlines. C. Thomas is the Co-Executive Director, and C. Ford is the Hotline Program Manager.

The VOICES4 Hotline first launched in 2018 and is a confidential and anonymous service that supports all who are affected by sexual violence. It is free and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. The VOICES4 hotline has been in use since 2018. Between October 1, 2023 and September 6, 2024 there were 1437 calls received, 2178 chats and 512 SMS messages received on the VOICES4 hotline. If people call the VOICES4 hotline for other types of victimization that is not sexual assault they will not be turned away. 20% of people that call the hotline report having co-occurring victimization.

Similarly, the VOICEDV Hotline is a confidential and anonymous service that provides support to all those who are affected by domestic violence. It also is free and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. The VOICEDV hotline has been in existence since 2021. Between October 1, 2023 and September 6, 2024 there were 1183 calls received, 880 chats and 298 SMS messages received on the VOICEDV hotline. 95% of calls are from people who identify as survivors of domestic violence. Translation services are available for the VOICES4 and VOICEDV hotline and some staff are bilingual.

The PPO subcommittee has completed a draft of our Board priority for no-cost service of personal protection order (PPO) service by law enforcement for victims. Staff recently met with law enforcement partners and stakeholders and are working out some concerns that were presented. The subcommittee will be meeting again soon and will have a follow up at another meeting.

The proposed 2025 meeting dates were reviewed by Board members.

MOTION: Moved by M. Pope to adopt the 2025 Board meeting schedule. Motion seconded by Wiese. Motion carried.

STAFF REPORT

G. Krieger introduced new staff member A. Velasco Gunn who is joining the Division of Victim Services with a wealth of experience and wisdom. She is the former Executive Director from AWARE in Jackson County and prior to that she was Associate Director at the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence. She also has experience as a state administrator of VAWA funds for the State of Minnesota. She will be splitting her time between special projects and the Quality Assurance team. She will play a critical role in the domestic violence funding planning going forward.

S. Banks from the Division of Victim Services Compensation department provided a Crime Victims Compensation update. She said the actual expansion of the Compensation program took effect on August 12, 2023, and over the last year has been able to provide compensation benefits for over 1,000 victims across the state. Prior to 2023 the average claims numbers were around 700 and currently there are around 1400 new claims which have come in for the Compensation program. There has been an increase of about 60% in payouts over the last year. The expansion of the program has been very impactful across the state.

S. Banks talked about the launch of the revamped Navigator program. The pilot Navigator program was missing many victims across the state. The new version will have four regional Navigators who will be responsible for covering the entire state. It will not only cover the victims who come through prosecutors' offices but places where victims may present but do not go through prosecution such as DVS funded agencies, other community funded agencies, hospitals, urgent care, therapists and funeral homes. Victims will receive assistance with completing a compensation application and collection of supporting documentation for the process.

T. Martinez, J. Kennedy and A. Gunn spoke about the domestic violence listening sessions that were conducted from May through July 2024 around the state to meet with programs and hear directly about their gaps and unmet needs. There were several specific sessions held that focused on culturally specific, underserved programs, and tribal partners. Overall, about 70 individuals participated.

There were two key themes at every session that were heard. One theme was regarding the lack of housing, lack of affordable housing in communities which is a huge challenge for programs. It not only impacted survivors but how they used their shelter services. The second theme was that the complexity of the work for programs has increased, the needs of the survivors has increased, and costs have increased while funding has not increased.

G. Krieger said the annual Tribal Listening Sessions with Uniting Three Fires Against Violence is coming up next month. Consultation will be conducted with tribes to determine how the Division of Victim Services can be more accessible and how to provide services better and be more culturally honoring.

G. Krieger spoke about the early stages of creating a court ordered gun relinquishment pilot project. Currently the Division of Victim Services is looking to fund a three-year project in two communities. There will be one year of planning and two years of implementation. L. Morgan and D. Ford are leading this project that will use STOP funding in the two communities. Hopefully it will be a chance for the Division of

Victim Services to learn and demonstrate forms and processes that work well in Michigan and can potentially be implemented in other communities.

A VOCA conference update was provided by G. Krieger. Several DVS staff recently participated and presented in the annual VOCA conference in New Orleans. There was great and impressive representation from Michigan, and we hope to share some of the material from those presentations soon.

J. Kennedy, E. Moon Carter, and T. Martinez with the support of the Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board, have been busy planning and preparing the Standing Together Against Trafficking (STAT) Conference. It will be held on Tuesday, September 17, at the Kensington Hotel in Ann Arbor. Highlights will be shared with the Board after the conference for anyone that cannot attend.

J. Averill said today is the one-year mark for the address confidentiality program going live. There are currently 215 participants of which 111 are adults and 104 are children, with the majority of participants being domestic violence survivors. There are 345 application assistants currently trained through the Attorney General's Office representing 55 counties. It is a great two-person team leading this work in the AG's Office.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

J. Averill mentioned the 2025 Board legislative priorities will be discussed during the next few meetings. Different legislative ideas and concepts will be presented to the Board and all members are free to provide any ideas that they would like the Board to consider. A full list will be brought to the Board for consideration at the beginning of the year.

L. Morgan spoke about a package of human trafficking related bills HB 5836-5854 which were introduced in the House in June. HB 5836 and 5838 would expand the list of crimes for which a victim of human trafficking could seek a conviction set aside which is also known as expungement. HB 5837 creates an affirmative defense for individuals who commit a crime as a direct result of being a human trafficking victim which does not exist now. HB 5839 amends the existing "Safe Harbor Protection" legislation for minor victims of trafficking. HB 5840 amends the existing statute outlining expert witness testimony in human trafficking cases. HB 5841-5854 amends existing statutes to change the term "prostitution" to "commercial sexual activity."

The staff's recommendation was to support this package of bills. HB 5836 The first and last sentences of the new Section 3 are unclear as written. Board staff sought but were unable to receive clarification regarding the intention. A question arose as to whether the Board objects to having victims of human trafficking being subject to the same limitations that others have in the set aside statute. Having a broader ability to set aside potentially any offense as a direct result of the person being a victim is something the Board would support.

MOTION: Moved by R. Shiemke to support HB5837- 5854. Motion seconded by M. Widman. Motion carried.

MOTION: Moved by M. Pope to support HB5836 if the limitations currently listed in Section 3 do not apply to human trafficking victims. Motion seconded by R. Shiemke. Motion carried.

J. Averill said SB 841-843 known as Melody's Law regarding necrophilia passed. The LGBTQ+ panic defense also passed. HB 4605-4606 which has to do with creating a general sales tax for the use of the

Public Safety and Violence Prevention Fund is on the Senate Floor. The current draft has a line specifying 2% of the fund will go to the Crime Victim's Rights Fund.

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 previous Board meeting and had the opportunity to request additional information if requested. Motion seconded by R. Shiemke. Motion carried.

BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

M. Pope asked staff to find out more ways to emphasize the Board's objection to live streaming of cases concerning domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, stalking and crimes involving children.

M. Pope said the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi (NHBP) will host the intertribal technical assistance working group that was created when VAWA 2013 was enacted. Every meeting has a new tribe who are joining and looking at implementing the jurisdiction that had been restored to tribes regarding criminal prosecution. It will be held in May, and this will be the first time it will be hosted in Michigan.

PUBLIC COMMENT

S. Beyersdorf from the State Court Administrators Office said she will pass along M. Pope's comment of objecting to live streaming of cases involving domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, stalking and crimes involving children.

S. Ettawageshik said Uniting Three Fires Against Violence (UTFAV) is having its Tribal Leadership Summit in October which will involve a talking circle with the Division of Victim Services. It's an opportunity for tribal leaders to come together and learn about emerging issues. The FBI will present about sextortion and human trafficking. The Attorney General's Office will be present as well to give updates on their task force.

UTFAV was contacted by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center to review materials specifically for tribal communities on their webpage. It is exciting they are creating this resource since the sexual violence rate in tribal communities are astonishing and more support is always needed.

The gun violence prevention movement is really building momentum. At a recent advocate meeting Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) were discussed and how they affect tribal communities.

She said S. Pilgrim Lewis were part of the National VOCA conference and that UTFAV appreciates their partnership.

B. Wade, a Forensic Registered Nurse said she is seeing an uptick in the past year of people engaging in sex work out of economic necessity because they need money for things such as groceries which has led to incredible violence and rapes.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Moved M. Widman to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by N. Buchanan. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Michael Bobbitt
Board Secretary