



**GOVERNOR'S  
COMMISSION ON  
SUICIDE PREVENTION**  

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**MARYLAND**

Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention Meeting  
November 17, 2021, 1:00pm-3:00pm

**Commission Members Present**

Robert Anderson	Department of Juvenile Services
Donna Barnes	National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide
Dana Burl	Department of Veterans Affairs
Jada Carrington	Representative of Young Adults
Johanna Dolan	Substance Use Recovery Community
Christina Drushel-Williams	Children and Youth Division, Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services
The Honorable Adelaide Eckardt	Member of the Maryland Senate
Monica Guerrero Vazquez	Hispanic/Latino Community
Kevin Johnson	Faith Community
Georgette Lavetsky	Deputy Secretary Public Health
Cynthia Macri	Asian American/Pacific Islander Community
Dustin Richardson	American Indian Community
Kirsten Robb-McGrath	Department of Disabilities
Susan Schwarten	Survivor of a Suicide Attempt
Haley Taylor	Maryland's Addictions Directors Counsel
Andrea Walker	County Health Officers
Kristen Washington	Representative of Active/Former Armed Forces Member
Holly Wilcox (Vice Chair)	Academic Community
Timothy G.Vail	Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Eileen Zeller	Mental Health Association of Maryland

**Workgroup Lead**

Lanny Berman	Suicide Fatality Workgroup
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**Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Staff**

Alex Walker	Behavioral Health Administration
Indu Radhakrishnan	Behavioral Health Administration
Barry Page	Behavioral Health Administration
Mary Viggiani	Behavioral Health Administration



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Kathy Rebbert- Franklin

Behavioral Health Administration

**Public Attendees**

Tina Simmons

TRIBE

**Welcome and Introductions**

Commission Co-Chair Wilcox welcomed all attendees to the Commission meeting. Commissioners introduced themselves via alphabetical order.

**Approval of September 8, 2021 Minutes**

The September 8th, 2021 meeting minutes were approved without revisions.

**Recommendation for Chair of Governor's Commission Vote**

Commissioner Wilcox gave the commission members an opportunity to nominate for the role of the Chair of the Governor's Commission. Commissioner Zeller self-nominated and presented her experience in suicide prevention. Every commissioner present supported this decision and moved to advance Commissioner Zeller as the candidate for Chair.

**Postvention Presentation - TRIBE**

Tina Simmons presented on postvention to the commission. TRIBE (Tri-County Behavioral Health Engagement Tidal Health Peninsula Regional, Atlantic General Hospital & Community Partners) seeks to establish a primary 23-hour crisis stabilization center located near Tidal Health Peninsula Regional. TRIBE was granted approval for a 5-year grant-funded behavioral health crisis program utilizing the Crisis Now model. The program award runs from CY2021 (Jan 1, 2021) – CY2025 (Dec 31, 2025).

The Crisis Now model has 3 main facets:

- Crisis Call Center & Air Traffic Control Services
- Community Based Crisis Teams
- Short-Term 23-Hour Crisis Stabilization Center

This evidence-based program was developed due to increased access to behavioral health services for patients in crisis outside of the emergency room and in an effort to promote interventions to assist in reducing unnecessary ED and hospital utilization.



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This program establishes a safe, home-like environment designed to relieve immediate crisis symptoms by

providing the following:

- Triage
- Observation
- Assessments
- Level of care intervention to deflect from unnecessary higher levels of care
- Linkage with peer support
- Brief crisis counseling
- Medication stabilization & management
- Care navigation & coordination of social determinant of health needs
- Linkage with follow-up care & services with community providers the same or next day
- Individuals followed for 5 days or until the follow-up appointment/warm-handoff to community provider is completed.

### **Suicide Fatality Review Board Legislation Discussion**

The legislation was co-sponsored by Senator Eckardt and Delegate Castro. The three biggest barriers to having this legislation passed is the fiscal note, the legislation's low place on the priority list, and the increasing workload in the Medical Examiner's Office due to a large increase in suicide deaths. How can we make connections to convince committees that this is priority legislation? How can we piggyback off overdose legislation, considering the increased risk of death with overdoses? Commissioner Wilcox suggested using recent suicide death data. Dr. Berman and commission staff, Indu, mentioned that current suicide death data is not yet complete enough to support this legislation. Commissioner Lavetsky mentioned that the Maryland Violent Death Reporting System (MVDRS) does collect data about the circumstance of suicide and that the 2019 data file will be available soon. The MVDRS brings together data from the medical examiner files and law enforcement reports. Commissioner Lavetsky and her team could assist with collecting available narrative data.

Commissioner Drushel-Williams mentioned that the Overdose Fatality Review Board and the Maternal and Child Health Fatality Review Boards. The history of other fatality review boards highlights the value of establishing these review boards to help justify the need in the suicide prevention community. Commissioner Anderson suggested inviting legislation to other groups that are involved in looking at these issues to help bring perspective to the need and concerns in suicide prevention work.



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To make the testimony as compelling as possible, the commissioners agreed the best next steps are to have case materials and use them to illustrate the chain of events that could be remedied and to give testimony of the benefits of having a Fatality Review Board. Volunteers can convene with Senator Eckardt for the Suicide Fatality Workgroup. Information will be sent through email to join the discussion.

**Governor's Challenge Updates**

The Governor's Challenge update will be given next meeting by Commissioner Burl.

**BHA Update**

Commission staff, Indu, announced the Office of Suicide Prevention's current updates. The office is still conducting the social media campaigns, Meet the Commission Staff. Youth Suicide Prevention initiatives are on underway and will be rolling out in the next two months including a toolkit and new messaging platform for youth.

Natalie Miller has transitioned from her role at the Office of Suicide Prevention.

The Office of Suicide Prevention is hosting the 2nd Annual Race and Mental Health Symposium on December 8th. The theme this year is "The Time is Always Now" and the keynote speaker is Dr. Theopia Jackson. Registration is now open.

**Open Discussion**

Commissioner Guerrero-Vasquez discussed ways to develop more effective outreach strategies for non-English speaking communities. She also expressed concerns with the lack of funding for programs that address suicide prevention in non-English speaking communities and in immigrant communities.

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention Youth and Victim Services was appointed to serve as chair of a newly created commission, The Commission on Trauma Informed Care.

**The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 pm.**

**The next Commission meeting will be held on January 19, 2021 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.**