



## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL MEDICAL COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes**

April 15, 2020

10:30 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

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In Attendance: Dr. Margaret Chou (DVCC), Erin Riddout (DCADV), Geetanjali Chatterjei, NP (Independence at Home), Karla Fleshman, LCSW, Kathy Hudson (SANE Nurse)

DVCC staff present: Moe Monagle, Dayna Belfiore, Amanda Alcaraz, Timothy Valeski

Presenters: Rosalie Morales with the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) & Jonathan Harting with the Department of Justice(DOJ)

- I. The Committee approved the minutes for the January 8, 2020 meeting.
- II. At the request of the DVCC Medical Committee, Presenters Rosalie Morales with OCA and Jonathan Harting with the DOJ joined the committee meeting to present on the topic of A Healthcare Providers Duty to Report Child Abuse in Cases Involving Domestic Violence.<sup>1</sup> The presenters provided feedback and insight on several case vignettes submitted by the DVCC Medical Committee which illustrated parents/caregivers and/or children impacted by domestic violence to varying degrees. The group had a fulsome discussion about the quandary healthcare providers are often faced with, due to having to balance opposing concepts, when considering if a patient visit requires a report. The group discussed the importance of universal education, informing patients of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of patient visits and

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<sup>1</sup> This request was the result of several DVCC Medical Committee discussions wherein members interpretations of the mandate differed. Additionally, some members were concerned that child abuse cases involving domestic violence should not have the same reporting mandate as other cases of suspected abuse and neglect. Concerns raised included but were not limited to the following: 1) including DV as part of universal child reporting mandates triggers HCP to make or consider making a hotline report anytime a patient with children in the home discloses domestic violence. As such, a patients' fear of child welfare involvement may be a barrier to disclosing domestic violence or accepting resources. 2) Making a hotline call due to a parent's exposure to domestic violence and not because a HCP believes or suspects abuse or neglect is occurring against the child could inadvertently increase a patients risk of harm or lethality. 3) Police involvement may invoke offender retaliation

including patients when making hotline reports, when possible. When discussing a vignette which illustrated teen dating violence. Presenters initially concluded a report was required due to the emotional distress the older partner was causing the younger and the age difference between the partners. After further inquiry and consideration of the example, recognizing that the example did not include any indication of sexual contact or a previous relationship where one partner had “care or custody” of the other, it was concluded that a report was not mandated. Following the vignettes, Ms. Morales (OCA) provided guidance and education about the definition of “domestic violence abuse” as contained on page 8 of the [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect in Delaware Resource Guide](#). Ms. Morales (OCA) also directed meeting attendees to the supplemental resource [The Structured Decision Making System for Child Protective Services](#) which explains the process and procedure the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families follows after a hotline call is made. Mr. Harting (DOJ) provided guidance and education on common traps or mistakes healthcare providers make when reporting or failing to make a report. The presenters went on to provide additional information and training on the following topics 1) minimum information needed to make a report and 2) routine follow up: when to call for the same incident.

### III. Future Meetings

#### 1. 2020 DVCC Medical Committee Meeting dates:

July 15, 2020 at 10:30 am

October 21, 2020 at 10:30am

All meetings will take place at the Middletown Police Department unless otherwise indicated on the [State of Delaware public meetings calendar website](#).