
Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC)

Friday, December 6, 2024

9:00 a.m.

FINAL APPROVED

Virtual: Teams Meeting Platform

In Person Meeting Site: Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

Robert D. Moreton Building

Room M-100, First Floor

1100 West 49th Street

Austin, TX 78756

Agenda Item 1: Call to order, roll call, and welcoming remarks

Dr. Carla Ortique, Chair, called the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC) meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Ortique, Chair, welcomed all committee members, staff, team members, and the public attending. She acknowledged the work done by the committee is a critical part in the efforts to address maternal deaths and disparities. Dr. Ortique stressed that the work of the committee honors the lives that have been lost of Texas women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the year after and requested a moment of silence in honor of the women as well as their families and communities that have been touched by the loss of a mother.

Dr. Ortique noted that Agenda Item Number 4 and 10 have been tabled, and Agenda Item 7 will be heard after Agenda Item 2. Dr. Ortique also noted that the committee will not go into executive session on this date.

Dr. Ortique introduced Ms. Jessica Arevalo, HHSC, Advisory Committee Coordination Office (ACCO) to read logistical announcements and call roll and determined if a quorum was reached.

Ms. Arevalo then proceeded with the meeting logistics and stated the meeting was being conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and conducted the roll call. Ms. Arevalo announced that with members present, quorum was met.

Table 1: The Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC) member attendance at the December 6, 2024 meeting.

Member Name	In Attendance
Dr. Meenakshi Awasthi	No
Dr. Meitra Doty	Yes

Member Name	In Attendance
Dr. Carey Eppes	Yes
Dr. Kelly Fegan-Bohm	Yes
Dr. Morna Gonsoulin	Yes
Dr. Angeline Opina Gonzalez	Yes
Dr. Manda Hall	Yes
Dr. Sarah Hartman	Yes
Dr. James Hill	Yes
Dr. Amy Raines Milenkov	Yes
Dr. Christina Murphy	Yes
Dr. Sherri Onyiego	No
Dr. Barbara Orlando	Yes
Dr. Carla Ortique	Yes
Dr. Diaa Osman	No
Dr. Robin Page	Yes
Dr. Lavannya Pandit	No
Ms. Nancy Puig	No
Dr. Patrick Ramsey	Yes
Dr. Avi Ruderman	Yes
Dr. Ingrid Skop	Yes
Dr. Lindsey Vasquez	Yes

Agenda Item 2: Consideration of September 27, 2024 draft meeting minutes

Dr. Ortique asked members if there were any edits or changes needed in the draft. No edits or changes were requested.

Motion:

Dr. Patrick Ramsey motioned to approve the minutes as presented from the September 27, 2024 meeting. Dr. Manda Hall seconded. Dr. Ortique turned the floor over to Ms. Arevalo to proceed with a roll call vote, and the motion passed with sixteen approve (Doty, Eppes, Fegan-Bohm, Gonsoulin, Opina-Gonzales, Hall, Hartman, Hill, Raines-Milenkov, Murphey, Orlando, Ortique, Page, Ramsey, Skop, Vasquez), no disapprove, no abstain.

Agenda Item 7 as listed on the Public Agenda: Perinatal Advisory Council (PAC) Presentation on Maternal and Neonatal Health in Texas

Dr. Ortique turned the floor over to Dr. Sadhana Chheda, Vice-Chair of the Perinatal Advisory Council (PAC).

Dr. Sadhana Chheda's presentation covered the following:

- Reviewed current PAC topics.
- Reviewed Neonatal Levels of Care updates as well as Maternal Levels of Care updates.
- Reviewed the work that has been done in collaboration with the Texas Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM).
- Reviewed the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) System Performance Improvement (PI) Workgroup.
- Provided updates on the Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies (TCHMB).
- Reviewed Southeast Regional Advisory Council (SETRAC) Perinatal Data, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Quality Measures, and Maternal Quality Indicators.
- Introduced the State of Texas Center of Excellence for Fetal Diagnosis and Therapy and reviewed their intended timeline.
- Reviewed the PAC Data Subcommittee.
- Provided a Summary of Severe Maternal Mortality (SMM) Data in 2018 versus 2022.
- Reviewed Texas State-Wide Obstetrics Quality Indicator (QI) Initiatives.

Agenda Item 3: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee Chair and Subcommittee Updates

Dr. Carla Ortique – Chair Update

Dr. Ortique provided the following:

- Reflected on the major events of 2024, such as the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of legislation of the 88th session that extended postpartum Medicaid to 12 months, the release of the 2024 Joint Biennial Report, and more.
- Reviewed the MMMRC's main functions and characteristics, as well as the case review process used by the MMMRC. Dr. Ortique recognized the members of the DSHS team and thanked them for the work. Dr. Ortique also recognized the University of North Texas abstraction team.
- Addressed recent media coverage regarding confidentiality in MMMRC's in the United States, and reminded members that the confidentiality agreements the members signed protect the integrity of the work that the MMMRC does and must be adhered to.
- Addressed a recent article published by The Washington Post regarding the MMMRC's decision to not review the 2022 and 2023 case cohort. Dr. Ortique emphasized that there were no nefarious intentions involved in the committee's decision to skip over 2022 and 2023. Dr. Ortique emphasized that the maternal health data from 2022 and 2023 will be published and made available to the public. Dr. Ortique emphasized the importance of becoming more contemporary in the review process in order to make relevant recommendations to the Texas state legislature.
- Shared the committee's main recommendations for the upcoming 89th Texas Legislature Session.

Dr. Ortique opened the floor to members for questions or comments.

Dr. Patrick Ramsey added the following:

- Reviewed multiple recent legislative changes that have impacted maternal health in Texas.
- Emphasized that the MMMRC must remain contemporary in order to make relevant recommendations that can have positive impacts on maternal health in Texas.

Agenda Item 4: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee Team Updates - Tabled

Agenda Item 5: Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Committee Operational and Maternal Health and Safety Initiative Updates

Dr. Carla Ortique turned the floor over to Dr. Manda Hall, Deputy Commissioner of the Community Health Improvement Division at DSHS.

Dr. Manda Hall provided the following update:

- Addressed concerns from the public about moving forward to the 2024 case cohort. Dr. Hall reminded the public that there were extensive conversations and deliberation that led to this decision.
- Emphasized that this is not the first time the committee has skipped years of review to become more contemporary.
- Emphasized that the Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Team will conduct analyses of maternal health data from 2022 and 2023, and this data will be published on the Texas health data website.

Dr. Shruthi Arismendez provided the following update:

- The new Maternal Mortality Review System (MMRS) is in the process of being built and will allow for more efficient and timely processes regarding case identification. The MMRS has a predicted launch date of April 2025.
- The MMMRC dashboard that will provide transparency around case cohort review progress to MMMRC members, stakeholders, and the public will be released in the next few months.
- Provided updates on the TexasAIM program, including the roll out of the Sepsis bundle that will be open for enrollment on Monday December 9, 2025.
- Provided updates on the Hear Her Texas campaign.

Dr. Shruthi Arismendez turned the floor back over to Dr. Carla Ortique. Dr. Ortique opened the floor for questions or comments.

Dr. Manda Hall acknowledged the DSHS team and colleagues at Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies (TCHMB) for their hard work in putting together the Texas AIM Summit on December 3, 2024.

Agenda Item 6: Maternal Rural Health Assembly Presentation on Rural Texas Maternal Health Rescue Plan

Dr. Carla Ortique turned the floor over to Dr. Kia Parsi, Executive Director of Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute, and Ms. Helen Kent Davis, consulting partner at HKD and associates and representing the Texas Health Institute and Texas Academy of Family Physicians as a Senior Policy Advisor.

Dr. Kia Parsi's and Ms. Helen Kent Davis's presentation covered the following:

- Reviewed maternal health data in rural Texas and summarized challenges faced specifically in rural communities.
- Reviewed the launch of the Rural Maternal Health Assembly Initiative.
- Reviewed the 2025 Rural Texas Maternal Health Rescue Plan developed by the Rural Maternal Health Assembly including recommendations such as Code Red Priorities, Critical Priorities, and Essential Priorities.
- Thanked the committee members for their work that contributed to the recommendations in the 2024 Joint Biennial Report.
- Elaborated on the 2025 Rural Texas Maternal Health Rescue Plan.

Dr. Robin Page expanded on Dr. Parsi's presentation to include Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioners and Midwives as a very important factor in rural communities.

Dr. Ingrid Skop asked if there has been any desire in Texas to create rural community-based Obstetrics and Gynecology residency programs so that more doctors can be trained who might stay in these areas.

Dr. Patrick Ramsey thanked Dr. Parsi and Ms. Davis and asked what they would advocate for the public and stakeholders to do with the research they have conducted.

Dr. Manda Hall expressed that DSHS would be interested in further collaborating with the Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute.

Dr. Carla Ortique thanked Dr. Parsi and Ms. Davis for their presentation.

Agenda Item 8: Future Agenda Items

Dr. Carla Ortique opened discussion for new business and potential agenda items for the next meeting scheduled for March 7, 2025.

Dr. Patrick Ramsey suggested a presentation be included from the CDC on the pregnancy related death report from the 36 states that report through MMMRIA.

Dr. Manda Hall suggested a presentation on updated MMMRC dashboards as well as data modernization updates.

Agenda Item 9: Public Comment

Ms. Arevalo, ACCO Facilitator, read the public comment announcement and coordinated with the ACCO production team requests from stakeholders who registered or were on-site to provide public comment.

Oral public comment –

- **The following commentors expressed concerns regarding the committee’s decision to not review the 2022 and 2023 case cohort.**
 - Ms. Kim Bachelor, Representative from Texas Christians for Reproductive Justice;
 - Ms. Judie Ward;
 - Ms. Jessica Phillips, Representative of TETAF (Texas EMS Trauma and Acute Care Foundation) and Texas Perinatal Services;
 - Ms. Stephanie Fassett;
 - Ms. Serita Fontanesi;
 - Ms. Morgan Miles;
 - Ms. Nakeenya Wilson;
 - Ms. Tracy Johnson;
 - Ms. Sarah Bell;
 - Mr. Daniel Kaufman;
 - Ms. Romy Ghosh; and
 - Ms. Laurie Fremgen.

- **Ms. Dinah Waranch, Representative of the Consortium of Texas Nurse Midwives and the Coalition of Texas Birth Centers.**
 - Requested more information regarding auto redaction that will be involved in the MMRS system.
 - Questioned how the relationship between the CDC and the MMMRC will continue in the future.
 - Encouraged committee to address issues regarding Medicaid reimbursement.
 - Raised concerns regarding maternal mortalities related to caesarean sections.

Agenda Item 10: Adjourn

Dr. Carla Ortique thanked the committee members, the DSHS team, and the public. Dr. Ortique stated that with no further business or discussion she would adjourn the meeting at 11:30.