

Lethality Assessment Workgroup Meeting  
November 1, 2024, 2:00pm EST (start time)

Roll Call:

Chief Brett Kirkland roll call of Executive Board.

| Name                      | Agency                                       | 11/1/2024                |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Amanda Price (Vice Chair) | Florida Partnership to End Domestic Violence | Present                  |
| Tanesha McDonald          | Florida Partnership to End Domestic Violence | Present                  |
| Jenna White               | Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network        | Not Present <sup>a</sup> |
| Joe Petito (Chair)        | Gabby Petito Foundation                      | Present                  |
| Tammy Taylor              | Hubbard House                                | Present                  |
| Jennifer Rodriguez        | Department of Children and Families          | Not Present              |
| Chief Todd Garrison       | North Port PD                                | Not Present              |
| Deputy Chief Ruth Cate    | Tampa PD                                     | Present                  |
| Chief Antoine Sheppard    | High Springs PD                              | Not Present              |
| Chief Robert Bage         | Ft Walton PD                                 | Present                  |
| Chief Richard Jones       | Gulf Stream PD                               | Not Present              |
| Sheriff Bob Gualtieri     | Pinellas County Sheriff's Office             | Present                  |
| Sheriff Vent Crawford     | Hardee County Sheriff's Office               | Not Present              |
| Sheriff Bill Prummell     | Charlotte County Sheriff's Office            | Present                  |
| Sheriff Mike Adkinson     | Walton County Sheriff's Office               | Present <sup>b</sup>     |

<sup>a</sup>Jenna White joined at approximately 10 minutes into the meeting. <sup>b</sup>Capt Taylor Park of the Walton County Sheriff's Office attended on behalf of Sheriff Mike Adkinson.

**FDLE Staff Present:**

Deputy Commissioner David Binder, Director Chad Brown, Deputy Director Melissa Bujeda, Chief of Policy and Special Programs Brett Kirkland, Research and Statistics Consultant Zachary Durrett, Research and Statistics Consultant Matthew Sharp, Post Basic Curriculum Manager Rob Bates, Bureau Chief Ashley Pennington.

Deputy Director Bujeda stated that members of the public are invited to attend the Workgroup meeting, and public members will be allowed to comment on the Workgroup with a three-minute time limit.

**Old Business:**

Motion present to approve the meeting minutes from the prior meeting were approved. First motion: Joe Petito, Second: Tammy Taylor. Workgroup voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

Deputy Director Melissa Bujeda discussed old business. In the prior meeting on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, members of the Workgroup voted against the use of the questions written in statute due to the lack of evidence-based support, which is a requirement of the law. Mr. Darrell Holly, national lab administrator at the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, clarified that the assessment only qualifies as evidenced-based if the questions are presented verbatim and the

specific order of the assessment. Consequently, the Workgroup voted unanimously to adopt the questions verbatim and in the identical sequence from the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Program (MNADV-LAP) to satisfy the evidence-based requirement. However, some barriers have been identified for the implementation of the MNADV-LAP.

- 1) The questions on the MNADV-LAP are subject to copyright law and cannot be used in any form without consent from the MNADV.
- 2) The cost for statewide implementation of the MNADV-LAP is more than \$30,000 and incurs an annual fee. There is also an annual fee in perpetuity. This cost does not include the travel and per diem travel charges for the required LAP trainers.
- 3) Each law enforcement agency must sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the DV center in its community.
- 4) No funding was presented in the statute; hence, this is an unfunded mandate.

Deputy Director Bujeda presented: Florida is the only state mandated by statute that every domestic violence (DV) victim be advised by the law enforcement officer of a DV center where the victim may receive necessary services. The law enforcement agency must send a copy of the initial police report to the advised DV center within 24 hours of the agency's receipt of the report.

#### [New Business:](#)

Chief Kirkland asked Mr. Darrell Holly about the procedures for referring DV victims to a DV center based on the outcome of the MNADV-LAP. Mr. Darrell Holly indicated that if a victim is screened as high danger, the protocol is to directly call the DV center. If a victim is screened as not in high danger, the call is not made to the DV center unless the victim opts to do so, and the law enforcement officer supplies the victim with contact information to the DV center.

Chief Kirkland indicated that Florida Statute 741.29 states all law enforcement officers who investigate a DV call are required to inform the victim of a DV center, including providing resources and contact information to their local DV center. Sheriff Gualtieri further confirmed that his agency sends all DV reports to a DV center.

Mr. Petito expressed a uniform system for handling DV calls/cases would be more effective, and removing the lethality assessment questions would reduce the effectiveness of reducing lethality. Mr. Petito asked how to make the current system better. Sheriff Gualtieri stated that the void lies in supplying adequate funding and resources to the DV service centers. Sheriff Gualtieri was concerned that the DV centers could process the additional data created from the extra questions and information to provide a better service. Captain Taylor Park suggested that the DV service centers be queried if they can process the additional data and how they would adapt their services to focus on victims.

FDLE suggested a potential option for the Workgroup to consider removing all questions and, instead, mandating that the lethality screening be conducted at the discretion of each law enforcement agency and domestic violence center. Each law enforcement agency would be required to certify to FDLE that they have written policies and protocols in place to refer all domestic violence calls to a domestic violence center, as mandated already by statute.

Jenna White commented that the Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network used the MNADV-LAP. The officers directly call in the high-danger lethality cases. Her network meets often with local law enforcement agencies to refine the collaborative process and note any DV trends in their community. The MOU has been in place for a very long time. She prefers an evidence-based model for providing data to help collect funding support.

Sherriff Gualtieri asked if the MOU from MNADV is waivable. Mr. Holly stated the MNADV does not want to waive the MOU. Mr. Holly clarified the MNADV provides the MOU language, and the MOU language is tailored between the law enforcement agency and the DV center. Both law enforcement agencies and the DV center would receive training on MNADV-LAP. Deputy Directory Bujeda iterated that the Florida Statute does not mandate that the local DV centers enter an MOU with law enforcement agencies, which can be a barrier in obtaining MOUs.

Mr. Holly stated that MOUs already exist in draft form by the MNADV-LAP, and he stated that all lethality assessment tools are not evidence-based. He believes using an evidence-based tool would yield the best outcome (lethality reduction). In his experience, it has been better to implement a statewide lethality assessment protocol through a program that already has such a protocol on the basis that there will be consistency and streamlined service with the DV center. Chief Bage expressed concerns that it will be a large undertaking to get an MOU from every Florida law enforcement agency. The current Florida statute does not mandate that local non-profit DV centers enter an MOU with local law enforcement agencies.

Chief Bage commented that passing the requirement of an evidence-based lethality assessment to local jurisdictions will be very difficult for small jurisdictions if the assessments are copyrighted. Mr. Holly advised that not using an evidence-based assessment is not advantageous because it would not lead to an outcome to support the effectiveness of the implemented assessment.

Sheriff Gualtieri supports the local approach to this DV implementation. The one size fits all approach does not work. Does not believe that getting all agencies in FL to sign the MOU will be simple.

Deputy Commissioner Binder added the Senate and House staff analysis before SB 1224 became law states that there is no be no fiscal impact and no regulatory impact to be placed on state or local government. Deputy Commissioner Binder asked Mr. Holly to provide the statistical analysis techniques used to validate the MDANV-LAP and support the idea that it is more effective than other assessments. Mr. Holly cited the Oklahoma Study conducted by Arizona State University by Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell and Dr. Jill Messing. Mr. Holly stated that the LAP accurately predicted 96% of cases of high-danger lethality.

Mr. Holly stated that it is essential for law enforcement to have training on the LAP, highlighting that the training will enhance relationship building between the officer and the victim to ensure that the victim is aware that they are in danger.

Amanda Price sought clarification on what the language would be to adopt the legislation to allow local/regional levels of law enforcement to have their own lethality assessment. Chief Kirkland at FDLE stated that FDLE could draft language that outlines a recommendation for policies and procedures for each agency to adapt for the Workgroup to preview. The language suggests removing specific questions from the legislation and would require each local agency

to adopt their questions and implementation policies and certify those questions and policies through FDLE.

The Workgroup would determine if the requirement for evidence-based be maintained on the lethality assessments adopted at local jurisdictions and certified by FDLE. Chief Bage believes it will be a heavy logistical task to obtain an MOU from every Florida agency as the process varies across the state.

There were no public comments.

The next meeting is set for Nov 8<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm.

Joe Petito's motion to adjourn was seconded by Jenna White.