

Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
Fatality Review Board
July 21, 2008

Present: Mr. James McGaughey, Attorney John DeMattia, Mr. David Carlow, and Mr. Daniel Greene, Mr. Peter Hughes, Ms. Anne Broadhurst and Ms. Christine Gaynor, OPA staff.

Absent: Dr. Gerard Kerins, Major Timothy Palmbach, Dr. Kirtsen Bechtel, Ms. Patricia Mansfield and Ms. Barbara Roy, OPA staff.

1. Minutes of the May 19, 2008 FRB meeting were not reviewed as not enough Board members were present at the meeting to constitute a quorum.
2. Response from the OCME

It was noted that the FRB recently received correspondence from the OCME in response to Mr. McGaughey's letter to Dr. Carver concerning the sudden and unexpected death of a twenty-year-old woman with Down syndrome. In his letter to Dr. Carver, Mr. McGaughey expressed concern that the Medical Examiner's decision not to assert jurisdiction in this particular case may have been unduly influenced by the young woman's disability. In response to this concern, Dr. Edward McDonough, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, noted that after discussing this case with all of the people involved, all agreed that this case should have been brought to the OCME for an autopsy. Dr. McDonough noted that a general review was completed with the physicians, clerks and investigators to reinforce the criteria for which cases should be reported and brought in for autopsy examination. Board members present agreed that a letter would be forwarded to Dr. McDonough thanking him for responding to the Board's concern. In addition, Board members noted that in the response to Dr. McDonough it was important to stress the fact that many people who have mental retardation or other developmental disabilities may receive no or minimal services from DDS. As such, the Medical Examiner's adherence to consistent criteria for asserting jurisdiction is important as DDS staff would not know to alert the OCME to any concerns. As discussed at a previous meeting, training to be developed by Major Palmbach and Dr. Kerins and hosted at the University of New Haven by the Forensic Science Program will also be offered to OCME staff to increase their awareness of disability issues.

3. Executive Session
4. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

The next FRB meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 15th from 1:30 - 4:30 PM at Sister Anne Virginie Grimes Health Center, across the street from St. Raphael's Hospital in New Haven.