MINUTES
MMA POLICY COUNCIL
MAY 1, 2019
6:00-8:00PM
MINNESOTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, JOHN MURPHY CONFERENCE ROOM

Members Present
Lisa Mattson, MD, Chair
Amy Boles, MD (via phone)
Timothy Dempsey, MD (via phone)
Britt Westgard Ehler
Bruce Gregoire
Jennifer Dens Higano (via phone)
Andrea Joplin, MD (via phone)
Sheila Jowsey-Gregoire, MD (via phone)
Robert Koshnick, MD (via phone)
Ariela Marshall, MD (via phone)
Thomas Mulrooney, MD (via phone)
Ahmed Khurshid Pasha, MBBS
Noel Peterson, MD, MS (via phone)
Spencer Pruitt, MD
Chris Reif, MD
Frank Rhame, MD
Caleb Schultz, MD, MPH
Lynne Steiner, MD (via phone)
Keith Stelter, MD (via phone)
Niloufar Tabatabaei, MD (via phone)
Kristene Tadesse (via phone)
Verna Thornton, MD
Kim Tjaden, MD
Craig Walvatne, MD

Members Absent
Peter Amadio, MD
Christy Boraas Alsleben, MD
Nicole Chaisson, MD
Joshua Crabtree, MD
Suliman El-Amin, MD
Randy Hemann, MD
Osama Ibrahim, MD
Adrine Kocharian
Ashokakumar Manhendra Patel, MD
Anne Pereira, MD
Neel Shah, MBChb
Annabelle Soares
Jennifer Tessmer-Tuck, MD

Guests Present
Courtney Jordan Baechler, MD, MS, Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Health
Cresta Jones, MD

Staff Present
Becca Branum (via phone)
Ruth Parriott
Juliana Milhofer
Andrea Stoesz

Welcome & Introductions
Lisa Mattson, MD, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. All attendees introduced themselves.

Approve March 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes
The following motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the March 14, 2019 MMA Policy Council meeting.

Presentation: Maternal Mortality in Minnesota
Courtney Jordan Baechler, MD, MS, Assistant Commissioner for Health Improvement at the Minnesota Department of Health spoke to the Council about maternal mortality in Minnesota. Dr. Baechler presented state and national-level data which showed that maternal mortality has been steadily increasing in Minnesota and nationally. Dr. Baechler also presented data on the causes of maternal mortality in Minnesota. Obstetric complications – including obstetric hemorrhage, hypertensive disorder, and pregnancy-related infections – and suicide, drug overdose, and violence were some of the most frequent causes of maternal death in women in Minnesota.

In addition, Dr. Baechler discussed racial and ethnic disparities in maternal outcomes. She presented data that demonstrated that the rate of maternal mortality for non-Hispanic African-American women is 2.3 times higher than that of white women. The American Indian mortality rate is about 4 times higher than that for white mothers. Dr. Baechler also discussed timing of pregnancy related mortality. In Minnesota, nearly half (44 percent) of maternal deaths occur between 43 days – 1 year postpartum. Nationally, approximately 65 percent of maternal deaths occur before delivery, or a week or more after giving birth.

Dr. Baechler concluded by stating that it is difficult to track temporal trends in maternal mortality over time due to small numbers, but that the rates of all cause mortality and injury are increasing. She stated that continued quality improvement efforts to improve clinical interventions to target prevention of pregnancy-related deaths are important, as well as utilizing a public health approach to protect maternal health.

Council members discussed Dr. Baechler’s presentation and had the opportunity to ask questions. Members discussed ways to improve maternal health, including:

- Education for rural providers who may have to treat a pregnant woman in an emergency
- Improving resources for postpartum depression, mental health, and decreasing social isolation postpartum
- Developing policy that incentivizes hospitals to implement quality improvement initiatives to reduce maternal deaths
- Improving access to providers on reservations

Open Issue Submission on Maternal Morbidity and Mortality
Cresta Jones presented an open issue that she submitted last year. The submission called for the MMA to support efforts to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality, especially those related to closing ethnic and racial disparities. It also calls for the MMA to support efforts to increase state and federal funding for Minnesota’s Maternal Mortality Review Committee and Minnesota’s Perinatal Quality Collaborative. Previous MMA policy only referenced maternal mortality and does not call for increased funding for the Maternal Mortality Review Committee or Perinatal Quality Collaborative. The Council discussed the proposed policy, and added language related to racial and ethnic disparities.

The following motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

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MOTION: To recommend that the MMA Board of Trustees adopt the following policy position:

Maternal Morbidity and Mortality: The MMA will support efforts to reduce rising rates of maternal severe morbidity and mortality in Minnesota, especially those related to the social determinants of health and racial/ethnic disparities. Specifically, the MMA will support federal and state funding for (1) Minnesota’s maternal mortality review committee and (2) Minnesota’s perinatal quality care collaborative.
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Presentation: Parental Notification for Vaccination
Council member Frank Rhame, MD presented a proposal to increase vaccination rates in Minnesota. His proposal included: (1) a legislative change to Minnesota’s minor consent law to allow 14-17 year-olds to be vaccinated without their parents being notified and (2) the creation of a wide-reaching coalition – including other medical societies, celebrities, teachers – to work together to promote vaccine use.

Council members discussed the presentation and what the MMA’s role could be in improving vaccination rates in Minnesota as well as related policy that has been debated at the Minnesota Legislature this year. The political implications and challenges related to passing vaccine-related legislation were also discussed. Additional ideas that were suggested included: (1) a social media campaign targeted at 18 year-olds, and (2) more actively working with parents and community members to assure them of vaccine safety and the benefits of vaccination. The Council concluded that this discussion should continue at the Council’s next meeting.

Legislative Update
Andrea Stoesz provided a brief legislative update, including an update on the status of the House and Senate negotiations on the HHS omnibus budget bill. Becca Branum provided an update on a recent Minnesota Supreme Court decision, *Warren v. Dinter*.

Adjourn
The following motion was made, seconded, and adopted:

**MOTION:** That the meeting be adjourned at 8:00 pm.