Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC)
Friday, August 28, 2026 1:00-4:00 PM
Oklahoma State Department of Health
123 Robert S. Kerr, 28th Floor, Room 1
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Open Meeting Act: Announcement of the meeting was filed with the Office of the Secretary of State on Wednesday, July 22, 2026 at 9:48 AM for the in-person meeting. The final agenda was shared via email August 25, 2026 at 8:10 AM and posted at the OSDH Central Office at 9:00 AM on August 26, 2026.

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Determination of Quorum: Dr. Angela Hawkins, Vice-Chair, called the meeting of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC) to order at 1:12 PM.
A quorum was determined with the presence of:

Name	Entity Representation	Name	Entity Representation
Barbara O'Brien	Director, Office of Perinatal Quality Improvement	Dr. William Po	Oklahoma State Medical Association
Dr. Angela Hawkins	Chair, Oklahoma Chapter of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists	Lori Essary	Director, Family Support and Prevention Services, Oklahoma State Department of Health
Dr. John Stanley	Medical Director, The Perinatal Center, Maternal Fetal Medicine	Jill Nobles-Botkin	Administrative Program Manager, Perinatal and Reproductive Health, Oklahoma State Department of Health
Dr. David Gahn	Southern Plains Tribal Health Board	Regina Kizer	President, OK Chapter of the American College of Nurse Midwives
Kristy Wente	Oklahoma Chapter, Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses		

Committee Members/Designees Absent: Dr. Chad Smith and Omare Jimmerson

Guests Present: Jennifer Palmer, Oklahoma Watch; Erika Rankin-Riley, OSDH Communications; Jess Cotton, OK Chapter of the American College of Nurse Midwives.

OSDH Staff Present: Six case abstractors: Tony Fleshman, Nikki Garrod, Hilary Miller, Leah Ekman, Amy Foster and Shelly Green. Jenna Bellantoni, Epidemiologist, Assessment, Family Support and Prevention Service, Binitha Kunnel, Program Manager, Family Support and Prevention Service, Alexis Lund, Family Support and Prevention Service, and Dawn Butler, administrative support, Family Support and Prevention Service.

Public Comment: None

Vote to accept the April 17, 2026 meeting minutes as presented: Dr. Po made a motion to accept the April 17, 2026 meeting minutes as presented with Regina Kizer seconding the motion. Members voted accordingly.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Barbara O'Brien	✓			John Stanley	✓		
Lorri Essary	✓			Regina Kizer	✓		
William Po	✓			Jill Nobles-Botkin	✓		
Dave Gahn	✓			Angela Hawkins	✓		
Kristy Wente	✓						

Motion Passed

Old Business:

Discussion and follow-up on previous recommendations: Barbara O'Brien provided an update regarding the Oklahoma Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative (OPQIC). She stated that a new staff member has been hired. Jill Hughes is a registered nurse with an extensive background working in perinatal care. She will be leading their OK Mama initiative focusing on addiction and maternal mental health conditions.

ERASE MM Funding Update: Jill Nobles-Botkin reported that OSDH received the Notice of Award for the next ERASE MM funding period beginning September 30, 2026, as well as supplemental funding to support medial campaign addressing the leading causes of maternal mortality. OSDH will work with the Office of Communications to develop the campaign, which may address maternal mental health, substance use, and cardiac conditions.

Rural Health Transformation Program: Lorri Essary reported that the Notice of Funding Opportunity supporting doula services through the Rural Health Transformation Program had closed and that award decisions were anticipated in September.

Legislative Updates: Dr. Hawkins reported that the Rural Obstetrics Readiness Act has advanced out of committee and was expected to be considered during the upcoming legislative session. She also reported that hospitals are transitioning to global billing following revisions to billing requirements, with the intent of improving tracking of services and diagnoses.

New Business: Regina Kizer announced to the group that she would be stepping down from her position as President, OK Chapter of the American College of Nurse Midwives. Jessica Cotton will be assuming Regina's spot on the committee as well as taking on the role of President, OK Chapter of the American College of Nurse Midwives.

Commissioner appointed positions: Jill Nobles-Botkin informed the committee that three of the Commissioner appointed seats on the committee have expired. Dr. John Stanley, Dr. William Po and Omare Jimmerson's seats are up for reappointment. She explained that two names have been submitted for Dr. Stanley's seat and four names have been put forth for Omare's seat. There were no other submissions for Dr. Po's seat. A decision is expected from the Commissioner of Health and seats are expected to be filled by the October meeting.

Annual Morbidity and Mortality Report; review, discussion and vote to approve or deny publication: Jenna Bellantoni presented the 2026 Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Report and reviewed keys findings related to maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity (SSM) in Oklahoma. She discussed Oklahoma's maternal mortality trends in comparison with national data and highlighted disparities associated with access to care, insurance status, poverty, and geographic location.

She reported that, based on a rolling three-year maternal mortality rate, the MMR for both the United States overall and Oklahoma decreased from 2021 – 2023 to 2022 – 2024 both nationally and in Oklahoma. When COVID-19- related maternal deaths accounted for approximately 5% of maternal deaths nationally and 10% in Oklahoma during 2022-2024.

Ms. Bellantoni also reviewed Oklahoma SMM data and noted limitations in statewide SMM surveillance because available data are limited to state licensed facilities. The SMM rate excluding transfusions increased from 81.8 per 10,000 inpatient delivery discharges in 2023 to 86.1 in 2024, a 5.3% increase. The most

common SMM indicators in 2024 included acute renal failure (ARF), disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC), acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), sepsis, and hysterectomy. She also reviewed racial disparities in SMM and noted limitations in available data for some populations.

Kristy Wente made a motion to approve and publish the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Report as presented with Barbara O'Brien seconding the motion. Members voted accordingly.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Barbara O'Brien	✓			John Stanley	✓		
Lorri Essary	✓			Regina Kizer	✓		
William Po	✓			Jill Nobles-Botkin	✓		
Dave Gahn	✓			Angela Hawkins	✓		
Kristy Wente	✓						

Motion passed

Moment of silence: Dr. Hawkins asked the members to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of the women who lost their lives, and the families left behind.

Enter into Executive Session: After requesting guests and members of the public to leave the meeting, Regina Kizer made a motion to enter into Executive Session with Dr. Gahn seconding. Members voted accordingly.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Barbara O'Brien	✓			Kristy Wente	✓		
Lorri Essary	✓			Regina Kizer	✓		
William Po	✓			Jill Nobles-Botkin	✓		
Dave Gahn	✓			John Stanley	✓		
Angela Hawkins	✓						

Motion Passed

Enter into Open Session: Regina Kizer made a motion to enter into open session with Dr. Angela Hawkins seconding the motion. Members voted accordingly.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Barbara O'Brien	✓			Kristy Wente	✓		
Lorri Essary	✓			Regina Kizer	✓		
William Po	✓			Jill Nobles-Botkin	✓		
Dave Gahn	✓			John Stanley	✓		
Angela Hawkins	✓						

Motion Passed

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Matters Discussed in Executive Session: During the executive session the following recommendations were identified.

1. Recently postpartum individuals should adhere to medical recommendations regarding attending a postpartum visit.

2. Facilities should have policies in place to facilitate timely follow-up appointments and coordinate care with obstetric and/or primary care providers during pregnancy and postpartum care.

3. Care systems should incorporate nutrition support and education (e.g., nutritionists/dietitians embedded into care) throughout preconception, interconception, pregnancy, and postpartum care.

4. Pregnant and postpartum individuals should adhere to medical recommendations regarding use of controlled prescription medications throughout care.

5. Providers should appropriately screen for and document mental health conditions for coordination of care if risk factors are present during pregnancy.

6. MMRC partners should conduct community outreach to emphasize the importance of evidence-based pregnancy and postpartum care.

Adjourn: Barbara O'Brien made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:07 PM.

Next Meeting:
October 30, 2026
123 Robert S. Kerr
Oklahoma City, OK 73102