



## **Maine Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (MePCSW)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**April 11, 2024**

**9:30-11:00 A.M.**

**MePCSW Members in Attendance:** Anne Gass, Sue Mackey Andrews, Dania Bowie, Rebecca Austin, Keita Whitten Foster, Jill Randall, Darylen Cote, Jennifer Wilkey, Fatuma Hussein

**MePCSW Members Absent:** Kate Elmes, Maulian Bryant, Jill Barkley Roy, Meredith Strang-Burgess, Samantha Lott Hale

**Staff and Guests:** Elinor Higgins (MePCSW), Nicole Ladner (Secretary of State's Office), Kelley Bowden (Maine Maternal, Fetal, and Infant Mortality Review)

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**Facilitator:** Anne Gass, PCSW Chair

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### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Welcome Elinor Higgins, new ED

### **Approve Minutes**

- Motion to approve February 2024 minutes—Sue
- Second—Dania
- All in favor

**Guest Speaker:** Kelly Bowden, Consultant, Maine Maternal, Fetal, and Infant Mortality Review (MFIMR)

- Share overview of how MFIMR functions with a prevention lens—an anonymous opportunity to look for systemic issues and opportunities for policy change that could prevent future deaths
- Gave overview of national and Maine-specific data regarding maternal deaths, infant deaths, and still births
- Questions and follow-up discussion touched on birthing options for families experiencing substance use disorder, the closure of maternity care units and rural hospital closures, challenges of data collection due to small numbers, impacts of environmental stressors on outcomes, and considerations related to safe sleep

## **Executive Director's Update**

- Overview of current and upcoming activities:
  - Meeting individually with each Commission member and setting up opportunities to talk with key partners
  - Familiarizing with the history of the MePCSW and its reports
  - Focus on filling MePCSW vacancies
  - Begin developing 2024 MePCSW report
  - Identify a date for an in-person strategic planning event in the late spring/summer to start building a mission and vision statement and a strategic plan
  - Learning about previous operations and organizational methods, developing infrastructure and processes for Commission function
  - Website updates in process
  - Plan to send short weekly updates

## **Membership Update**

- Sue created a spreadsheet for tracking membership
- Discussion around balancing extended appointment and nomination timelines with ensuring availability and interest of candidates, various options for how to address timeline concerns
- Follow-up conversation will be scheduled for those available and interested

## **Legislative Update**

- Extensive activity related to the budget
- Governor made changes to the paid family leave statute through budget change package
- Shield Bill passed the House and is going to Senate
- Waiting on gun safety bills

## **MePCSW Member Sharing**

- Interest in centering equity and DEI efforts, potential for a MePCSW equity statement