COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

October 10, 2024

Sent Electronically
Kimberly Murphy
Children's Bureau

Dear Ms. Murphy,

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has established a new Citizen Review Panel (CRP). As required by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the newly created Safety CRP will replace the Virginia State Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) CRP. VDSS wanted to ensure the establishment of the new CRP met CAPTA requirements and will be operated efficiently.

The Virginia State CFRT informed VDSS in May 2023 that they would no longer be a CRP, this was due to no longer having the capacity to carry out responsibilities. After much communication between VDSS and the Virginia State CFRT, they decided to officially end the CRP in September 2023. Through the Children's Bureau Capacity Building: Center for the States, peer-to peer connection meetings were held with West Virginia, Georgia, and Arizona. These meetings provided insight on how other States run their CRPs and if they are stand-alone or part of another committee. A CRP committee was formed in November 2023 and included members from VDSS and the Office of the Children's Ombudsman.

In March 2024, a CRP Coordinator was hired by VDSS. The CRP Coordinator began attending CRP committee meetings for the creation of the new Safety CRP. The coordinator oversaw recruitment of members, helped to establish the Standards of Operations, and created an orientation training and resource list. Recruitment of members included people from various areas, such as Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Department of Education, Child Advocacy

Centers, Virginia Department of Health, Office of the Children's Ombudsman mental health field, lived experience, and law enforcement.

The Safety CRP held its first meeting on July 23, 2024. The first meeting consisted of introductions, orientation, and a discussion about safety within the Child Welfare System. During the next meeting, the Panel will elect a Chair and Vice Chair. VDSS will continue to provide support and information requested by the Panel for them to make recommendations in the coming year. The Safety CRP looks forward to providing a more in depth report next year.

Sincerely,

Shannon Hartung

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Protection Program Manager