



Sentinel Event Review

Update Dec 2024

Review led by the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission,
Domestic Violence Review Team

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Purpose



Understand risk factors and circumstances



Consider the event and the history leading up to the event



Identify prevention opportunities



Focus on prevention of future incidents



Focus on identifying gaps and opportunities for process, policy, practice, or system change

Review Process

Discuss case information

Identify risk factors

Recommend system improvements

Identify prevention opportunities

Be a catalyst for community action

Report back on progress of recommendations

Background

- Incident
- Initial response
- Request for review
- Convening of multi-disciplinary team
- Multiple meetings
- Development of recommendations
- Review, prioritization, and adoption of recommendations

Alma Center	Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office
Benedict Center	Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office
City of Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission	Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission
City of Milwaukee Mayor's Office	Milwaukee Police Department
City of Milwaukee Common Council	Safe and Sound
Medical College of Wisconsin	Sojourner Family Peace Center
Milwaukee Community Justice Council	The Asha Project
Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, Behavioral Health Services	Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Recommendation Structure

- Recommendations were reviewed by the team
- Opportunity to provide input on wording
- Prioritized based on potential reach and impact
- Grouped into both categories and tiers
- Specific order in the report is not reflective of the priority
- Input on the complexity to implement
- Recommendation structure includes:
 - Description
 - Status
 - Funding needed
 - Difficulty/complexity
 - Context

Priority Recommendation Updates: Resources

Priority Recommendation 1: Expand the resources for the Domestic Violence High-Risk Team (DVHRT) to increase capacity for the number of cases staffed by the team longer-term and to support resource needs of the DVHRT agencies.

Status: In process – Initial funding was received from the Governor’s Office currently projected to end in March 2025. Additional funding has been sought, but not yet secured. This funding supports the higher number of cases reviewed (30 per week) and the resources from multiple partner agencies. Approximately \$1 million is needed to support this level of review on-going with involvement from multiple partner agencies.

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Priority Recommendation Updates: Resources

Priority Recommendation 2: Consider a rapid response model to create a team with specific expertise, including either advocates or individuals with lived experience with DV/IPV, that could be part of the direct co-response to incidents at the same time as the law enforcement response. This should also consider response teams including agencies with culturally specific expertise.

Status: In process – A pilot has been underway in District 4 with a co-responder model as a collaboration between Sojourner Family Peace Center, MPD, and the Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office (MCDAO) with a forensic nurse, advocate, DA representative, and officer. Data is being collected to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of this model. A challenge is the hours of operation and is a resource-intensive process. Funding would be needed to further expand this into other areas.

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: High

Priority Recommendation Updates: Resources

Priority Recommendation 3: Consider an expansion or reallocation of resources for all law enforcement agencies in Milwaukee County to focus on locating and apprehending individuals with a DV/IPV history who have absconded from community supervision or have active felony warrants. This may include identifying ways to escalate attempts to find an abuser if additional incidents are reported.

Status: In process – Changes have been made to enhance the follow-up with cases are flagged and the information is going both the DOC and to the Milwaukee Collaborative Offender Re-entry Program (MCORP) and action is often being taken even before the DVHRT staffing (currently the focus is on DVHRT cases). More follow-up is occurring to locate individuals when reports are coming in and DOC is updating warrants and there is a higher level of response if it is updated to a violent offense of some type (versus just absconding from supervision for example). Also, if the new charge is a felony, the individual can be extradited. There has also been an enhancement with the Marshals Fugitive Taskforce and more direct contact between the DOC/DCC agent and the Marshals.

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Priority Recommendation Updates: Resources

Priority Recommendation 4: Explore additional funding opportunities specifically focused on housing options (short- and long-term) for emergent situations to provide safe and secure shelter for those experiencing DV or IPV victimization.

Status: In progress – there is a need for transitional housing and supportive/restorative housing and there is limited number of crisis beds. Through partnerships, at least one application has been submitted for HUD funding for rapid rehousing and there is potentially some funding for direct financial assistance to survivors through the Office of Violence Against Women, but the funding has not yet been secured and even if received, still will not be sufficient to meet the overall needs. A report is coming out on homelessness and domestic violence that highlights that a range of options for housing needs to be available (short-term, long-term, transitional, crisis) and that survivors need access to those housing options.

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: High

Priority Recommendation Updates: Response Coordination

Priority Recommendation 6: Explore a system for distributing DV hotline calls coming in to include agencies with a specific culturally specific approach or population of focus.

Status: In progress- Sojourner has been exploring potential technology changes to the hotline to modernize and increase the capabilities for how calls are received and routed. In addition, they have added an option to their regular texting to share information on *We Are Here MKE* as part of their initial response and are exploring other ways to enhance partnerships with other agencies providing culturally sensitive resources across Milwaukee.

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Priority Recommendation Updates: Research and Evaluation

Priority Recommendation 10: Examine the impact of MPD conducting a second outreach to victims who decline referrals to DV resources to identify how often this is leading to consent to share information with advocacy organizations. This recommendation is connected to Marsy's Law.

Status: In process – MPD has been conducting follow-up with individuals if the initial offer of connection to resources is not taken. Data are being collected to identify whether there has been an increase in the number of victims consenting to share with the follow-up contact. Although there are some data limitations, estimates are that approximately 23% of individuals that initially did not consent to connection to resources are consenting after the follow-up call.

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Priority Recommendation Updates: Research and Evaluation

Priority Recommendation 11: Examine the impact of the newly created position through expanded DVHRT funding from the Governor's Office to attempt connection of suspects of DV to services and support and seek additional longer-term funding.

Status: In process – the position has been hired and operating as part of the DVHRT. The position conducts outreach to clients involved in high risk DV situations (phone or in person), offers Open Men's Group sessions to clients with the goal of working toward the Journey Toward Legacy (dv education/trauma/healing focused care), facilitates the curriculum, makes connections with other community organizations, prepares self-care plans for each client being released into the community, works to find reliable housing resources for clients. A few initial metrics for Jan to Sept 2024 include:

Cases staffed: 631

Contacts made: 372

Open Men's Group participation: 65

Clients enrolled in classes: 99

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Priority Recommendation Updates: Research and Evaluation

Recommendation 12: Further research the interface of those perpetrating DV/IPV who have histories of firearm possession or use and the propensity to go on to commit DV/IPV offenses while armed.

Status: In process – initial focus is to further understand the existing literature to understand the relationship between individuals with DV/IPV history who also have prior firearm-related offenses (regardless of whether or not it is DV/IPV related) and the likelihood of future involvement in DV/IPV incidents with a firearm. In addition, analysis of local data is also being conducted to further understand to what extent this occurs in Milwaukee.

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Priority Recommendation Updates: Emergency and Law Enforcement Response

Priority Recommendation 14: Create a protocol with a focus on ensuring persons reporting DV or IPV to law enforcement do so in an environment and manner that is trauma informed and most conducive to eliciting ongoing cooperation from victims.

Status: In process – MPD secured funding to be able make changes to multiple district stations starting with Districts 3 and 6 to provide a private space or “soft room” for individuals reporting DV/IPV situations in person. Locations in other districts have also been identified. There has also been a focus on incorporating artwork through Project Beloved. There is also the option to go to Sojourner for reporting as well.

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Priority Recommendation Updates: Corrections Response

Priority Recommendation 18: Improve current processes to ensure DOC is aware of new incidents or law enforcement contacts (calls, reports, arrests, etc.) involving those on supervision, particularly those with a DV/IPV history.

Status: In process - Since this incident, there have been efforts by DOC to work more closely with MPD to ensure the timely identification of calls, reports, or arrests involving individuals on community supervision for a DV-related incident by having a team member proactively review reports to identify potential law enforcement contacts to facilitate proactive follow-up. Currently this is happening with MPD, but not other jurisdictions within the county.

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Priority Recommendation Updates: Corrections Response

Priority Recommendation 22: Further explore the implications of IPV situations (such as a dating situation where the individuals are not living together and do not have a child in common) that do not meet the statutory definition of DV/DA and thus are not included many of the aspects of DV response. Then consider whether to recommend changes to the current DA statute.

Status: In process – Initial steps were to explore statutory language in other states. Initial research of surrounding midwestern states identified that each of these states (Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa) all have some form of dating relationship outlined as part of their DV statutes. Variations include current or former intimate partners, individuals who have or had a dating relationship, individuals involved in a significant romantic or sexual relationship, etc. *WI is unique among midwestern states in not having dating relationship included.* Next steps are to further examine what the system impact would potentially be of such a change and how many incidents would likely fit this definition and potential other consequences of changing statute (such as penalty factor implications).

Funding needed: Not yet known, but likely

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Priority Recommendation Updates: Corrections Response

Priority Recommendation 23: Further document the challenges associated with Marsy's law and based on those challenges, consider potential advocacy for changes.

Status: In process - A mapping exercise was separately carried out about where Marsy's law comes into play in two hypothetical situations, but did not speak specifically to the concerns regarding information sharing balanced with protecting both rights and privacy. The documentation process has started and overall the initial challenges identified are related to the sharing of information for referrals and how this limits the ability for agencies to coordinate in providing resources to individuals. This also ties into recommendation 10 with the impact of additional follow-up. May be additional opportunities for training with law enforcement, as well as understanding when individuals learn about Marsy's law and when they are notified of their rights.

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Activities and Next Steps

- Presented and shared report with multiple groups
- Have had a follow-up meeting and discussions with group members and participating agencies
- Bringing new members in as people and positions change
- Some that are being discussed today have risen further as priorities
- Working to identify others that are likely to have bigger impact
- Also looking at other partnerships
- In process of refining some of the recommendations to assist with this process
- Will be publishing an updated version of the report

Additional Considerations

- Importance of DV/IPV focus
 - Need to continue to give specific attention to DV/IPV as a particular form of violence
- Funding:
 - Has become even more of an issue with reductions in funding for core services
 - Need to look at longer-term sustainable funding
 - As well as how to fund some of the newer initiatives
- Recommendations
 - Some of these are not “new” but came up as gaps or areas to address from the review
 - Also need to continue to look at other gaps that are identified through other mechanisms, situations, or collaborative efforts



Sentinel Event Review *Questions/ Discussion*