

# **90 Day Report of the Critical Incident Review Team Required By W. Va Code §61-12B-5**

The information contained within this report reflects the views and recommendations of the Critical Incident Review Team, a multi-disciplinary body established under W. Va. Code §61-12B-1 *et seq.*, only and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or recommendations of the Department of Human Services.

The Critical Incident Review Team (CIRT), mandated by House Bill 2880, of the West Virginia Legislative Session 2025. CIRT reviewed a total of 32 cases between January and April. There was limited participation due to the legislative session and member's limited availability to attend. The dates of the reviews occurred:

- January 12, 2026
- February 9, 2026
- March 9, 2026
- April 6, 2026

Of the 32 critical incident referrals reviewed:

- 12 referrals were accepted for assessment
  - Of the 12 accepted referrals, 7 were determined to be the result of abuse or neglect:
    - 3 findings of neglect
      - 2 for lack of supervision
      - 1 for impairment while caring for an infant
    - 3 findings of physical abuse
    - 1 finding of medical neglect
- 20 were screened out
- 3 referrals were near fatalities
- 29 were fatalities

After reviewing the 32 referrals and all corresponding documentation, as well as taking previous reviews into consideration, the team discussed several recommendations moving forward.

- Reevaluate the 45 day timeframe regarding case reviews. Due to the constraints imposed by the timeframes, many initial assessments, medical examiner reports, and even law enforcement reports are not available at the time of the review. The Bureau for Social Services and law enforcement often cannot move forward with a finding of maltreatment or charges due to the lag in medical examiner reports, with delays anywhere between 6 and 12 months.
- The team noted a continued pattern of SUID and co-sleeping deaths in infants. The team discussed the varying avenues of education to parents from the time of the birth of their child and other touchpoints throughout infancy such as through the Office of Maternal, Child, and Family Health (OMCFH), Women, Infants, & Children (WIC), as well as other programs.
- Ensuring mental health services and education is provided in all schools. The team will be seeking information from the Department of Education on existing mental health education and programs. The team reviewed a significant number

of child suicides and believe that mental health education is pivotal teen suicide prevention.

## **CIRT Attendance Through September 2025**

### **Attendees for January 12, 2026, Meeting:**

- Lorie Bragg - Commissioner Bureau for Social Services
- Susan Richards - Deputy Commissioner Quality Initiatives
- Rebecah Carson - Deputy Commissioner Field Support
- Stephanie Lester - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations South
- Kendra Boley-Rogers - Deputy Commissioner Policy and Programs
- Richard Dempsey - Deputy Director Office of Drug Control Policy
- Cindy Hill - Director of Children's Services Supreme Court
- Elizabeth Hardy - Commissioner Bureau for Behavioral Health
- Jessica Bryant - Director, Foster Care Ombudsman

### *CIRT Team Members who did not attend on January 12, 2026:*

- *Senator Rucker - WV Senate*
- *Paul Chapman - Deputy Director Foster Care Ombudsman*
- *James Samples - Prosecuting Attorney Institute*
- *Sgt. Austin Farmer - WV State Police*
- *Laurea Ellis - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations North (New Member)*
- *Delegate Pinson - WV House of Delegates*

### **Attendees for February 9, 2026, Meeting:**

- Lorie Bragg - Commissioner Bureau for Social Services
- Susan Richards - Deputy Commissioner Quality Initiatives
- Rebecah Carson - Deputy Commissioner Field Support
- Paul Chapman - Deputy Director Foster Care Ombudsman
- Stephanie Lester - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations South
- Kendra Boley-Rogers - Deputy Commissioner Policy and Programs
- Laurea Ellis - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations North
- Jessica Bryant - Director, Foster Care Ombudsman
- Delegate Pinson - WV House of Delegates

### *CIRT Team Members who did not attend on February 9, 2026:*

- *Senator Rucker - WV Senate*
- *Cindy Hill - Director of Children's Services Supreme Court*
- *Richard Dempsey - Deputy Director Office of Drug Control Policy*
- *James Samples - Prosecuting Attorney Institute*
- *Sgt. Austin Farmer - WV State Police*
- *Elizabeth Hardy - Commissioner Bureau for Behavioral Health*

### **Attendees for March 9, 2026, Meeting:**

- Lorie Bragg - Commissioner Bureau for Social Services
- Rebecah Carson - Deputy Commissioner Field Support
- Paul Chapman - Deputy Director Foster Care Ombudsman
- Stephanie Lester - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations South
- Kendra Boley-Rogers - Deputy Commissioner Policy and Programs
- Laurea Ellis - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations North
- Sgt. Austin Farmer - WV State Police
- Delegate Pinson - WV House of Delegates

*CIRT Team Members who did not attend on March 9, 2026:*

- *Senator Rucker - WV Senate*
- *Cindy Hill - Director of Children's Services Supreme Court*
- *Richard Dempsey - Deputy Director Office of Drug Control Policy (Notified 3/9/26 Mr. Dempsey would no longer be on the review team.)*
- *James Samples - Prosecuting Attorney Institute*
- *Elizabeth Hardy - Commissioner Bureau for Behavioral Health*
- *Jessica Bryant - Director, Foster Care Ombudsman*

**Attendees for April 6, 2026, Meeting:**

- Lorie Bragg - Commissioner Bureau for Social Services
- Rebecah Carson - Deputy Commissioner Field Support
- Paul Chapman - Deputy Director Foster Care Ombudsman
- Stephanie Lester - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations South
- Kendra Boley-Rogers - Deputy Commissioner Policy and Programs
- Laurea Ellis - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations North
- Delegate Pinson - WV House of Delegates
- Jessica Bryant - Director, Foster Care Ombudsman

*CIRT Team Members who did not attend on April 6, 2026:*

- *Senator Rucker - WV Senate*
- *Cindy Hill - Director of Children's Services Supreme Court*
- *Richard Dempsey - Deputy Director Office of Drug Control Policy (Notified 3/9/26 Mr. Dempsey would no longer be on the review team.)*
- *James Samples - Prosecuting Attorney Institute*
- *Elizabeth Hardy - Commissioner Bureau for Behavioral Health*
- *Sgt. Austin Farmer - WV State Police*

**Attendees for May 4, 2026, Meeting:**

- Lorie Bragg - Commissioner Bureau for Social Services
- Rebecah Carson - Deputy Commissioner Field Support
- Stephanie Lester - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations South
- Kendra Boley-Rogers - Deputy Commissioner Policy and Programs

- Laurea Ellis - Deputy Commissioner Field Operations North
- Rhonda Larew - Director of Division of Planning and Quality Improvement
- Nancy Love - Program Coordinator (CIRT Coordinator)
- Jessica Bryant - Director, Foster Care Ombudsman
- Cindy Hill - Director of Children's Services Supreme Court
- Senator Rucker - WV Senate (Participated in first two cases)

*CIRT Team Members who did not attend on May 4, 2026:*

- *James Samples - Prosecuting Attorney Institute*
- *Sgt. Austin Farmer - WV State Police*