



Commission on Women's Health

Life Experiences Subcommittee

July 6, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

Senate Room C, 311 General Assembly Building, Richmond

<https://studies.viriniageneralassembly.gov/studies/775>

The Life Experiences Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) of the Commission on Women's Health (the Commission) met in Richmond with Delegate Bonita Anthony, chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Subcommittee's website](#).

Review of Scope

Delegate Bonita G. Anthony, Chair

Madison Richardson, Program Coordinator, Division of Legislative Services

Ms. Richardson read the statement of the scope of work for the Subcommittee during the 2026 interim. Delegate Anthony discussed the agenda for this meeting.

Maternal Mortality Review Team Overview

Melanie Rouse, PhD, MSHP, Virginia Department of Health

Dr. Rouse delivered an informative presentation on Virginia Department of Health's Maternal Mortality Review Team (MMRT) covering scope of the team's work, as well as how cases are identified and data is analyzed. She also covered all of MMRT's recommendations from its 2025 report. Delegate Simonds inquired as to how the new membership introduced in HB 204 (Simonds, 2024) was working out in practice. Dr. Rouse responded that the inclusion of a representative of the Department of Corrections and a representative of the State Board of Local and Regional Jails was going very well.

Review of Maternal Health Bills from Previous Legislative Sessions

Sabrina Miller-Bryson, Senior Legislative Counsel, Division of Legislative Services

Ms. Miller-Bryson presented on bills from previous session related to maternal health. Delegate Shelly A. Simonds flagged issues related to regulating donor-breast milk and also suggested placing more attention on doula care. Ms. Kenda Sutton-El identified terminology-related issues that are obstructing certain community-based organizations from receiving funds from Virginia's perinatal health hub initiative and stated that none of the community-based organizations within the community were actually funded. Delegate Anthony suggested inviting a representative from the Virginia Department of Health to explain why this is occurring.

¹ **Members Present:** Delegate Bonita G. Anthony (chair), Delegate Hillary Pugh Kent, Delegate Shelly A. Simonds, Theresa Nicole Bremby, Kenda Sutton-El

Members Absent: Senator Russet W. Perry, Natalie Shorter

Review of Failed/Stricken Bills from the 2026 Legislative Session

Delegate Destiny LeVere Bolling

Senator Angelia Williams Graves

Delegate Shelly Simonds

Delegate LeVere Bolling explained the differences between HB 1468 (LeVere Bolling, 2026) and HB328 (Sullivan, 2026), which absorbed the former. She identified several goals from the former bill which were not realized in HB 328. Delegate Anthony recommended inviting representatives from the Health Economics Resource Center, the State Corporation Commission, the Bureau of Insurance, Virginia Medicaid, Virginia Department of Health, and Birth in Color to provide some further information in the August meeting. Delegate Anthony also requested counsel to research the differences between the two bills in preparation for the next meeting. Senator Williams Graves presented on two bills that she sponsored during the 2026 Session, SB 188 and SB 193, neither of which were heard in committee. Ms. Sutton-El, in reference to SB 188, suggested the Subcommittee could reach out to regional health systems to ask about stillbirth-related costs. Senator Williams Graves affirmed that this would be helpful. Delegate Simonds presented on HB 600 (Simonds, 2026). She mentioned that the fiscal impact was an obstacle to enactment and believes that she will be able to decrease the cost for next session. Delegate Anthony suggested several bills for the Subcommittee to look into. She also recommended inviting a representative from the Department of Labor and Industry to speak about menopause and perimenopause protections in the workplace.

Discussion of Work Plan Development and Future Meeting Dates

Delegate Anthony invited members of the Subcommittee to discuss any relevant topics, data requests from agencies, or other bills from the 2026 legislative session that they would like to include for future meetings. Delegate Kent proposed highlighting rural data points in regards to maternal mortality rates, healthcare access, safety and human trafficking. The next meeting will be determined by polling members at a later date.

Public Comment

Members of the public were given a chance to speak regarding the information presented at the meeting.

For more information, see the [Commission's website](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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