

New York State Racing and Wagering Board

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RACING AND WAGERING BOARD ANNOUNCES NEW YORK TASK FORCE ON RACEHORSE HEALTH AND SAFETY TO INVESTIGATE AQUEDUCT FATALITIES

The New York State Racing and Wagering Board today announced the selection of a team of nationally respected industry experts to investigate the circumstances that caused 20 equine fatalities at the Aqueduct Racetrack's inner track meet between December 2011 and March 18, 2012.

Last week, the Office of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo called on The New York Racing Association, Inc. (NYRA) to name a team of investigators to review the cause or causes of the fatalities, subject to approval of the Racing and Wagering Board. The resulting New York Task Force on Racehorse Health and Safety consists of four highly regarded individuals in the industry who will provide objective research and analysis: Jerry Bailey, Alan Foreman, Dr. Scott E. Palmer and Dr. Mary Scollay.

John D. Sabini, Chairman of the New York State Racing and Wagering Board said, "This team of renowned experts has the knowledge, experience and objectivity to shine a light on the causes behind these tragic breakdowns. I'm confident that their findings will help improve the safety and well-being of equine athletes racing in New York."

Rick Violette, Jr., President of the New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Inc. (NYTHA), said, "We have assembled an outstanding panel of industry experts, who will conduct a fair and objective investigation to determine if there is a definitive cause for the increase in the number of catastrophic breakdowns at Aqueduct this winter. We trust they will analyze all data meticulously, and New York's horsemen will give our whole-hearted support to this initiative. No one has a more vested interest in protecting our horses and our jockeys to the very best of everyone's abilities than the 5,000 members of the New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association."

In addition to examining the physical condition of Aqueduct's inner track, the team will review and advise on policies relating to:

- Public disclosures
- Necropsies
- Track conditions
- Pre-race examination of horses

Additionally, the team will examine rules and practices relating to:

- Claiming procedures
- Veterinary procedures
- Equine drug use

The Racing and Wagering Board, NYRA and NYTHA will work cooperatively with The New York Task Force on Racehorse Health and Safety to ensure that its mission is realized.

To ensure objectivity, the four members of the New York Task Force on Racehorse Health and Safety reside outside New York State.

The Task Force was assembled with the assistance of NYTHA President Richard A. Violette, Jr., and includes:

Jerry Bailey is a retired Hall of Fame jockey who has participated in more than 30,000 races, many in New York State. A seven-time Eclipse champion jockey, Bailey has won the Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont Stakes twice each, as well as the Breeder's Cup Classic five times. Bailey, who currently works as a television analyst, served as President of the Jockeys' Guild and was instrumental in promoting protective safety vests for riders.

Alan Foreman is Chairman and CEO of Thoroughbred Horsemen's Associations, Inc., representing more than 20,000 owners and trainers across the country. Mr. Foreman also serves as Vice Chairman of the Racing Medication & Testing Consortium and as counsel to many horsemen's and racing industry organizations.

Dr. Scott E. Palmer is the hospital director and staff surgeon at the New Jersey Equine Clinic, where he has practiced for more than 30 years. He is a past president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), which represents more than 10,000 veterinarians and students across the world. He currently serves as Chairman of the AAEP Racing Committee. Dr. Palmer was also named "Veterinarian of the Year" twice by the New Jersey Association of Equine Practitioners.

Dr. Mary Scollay is the equine medical director of the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission. Previously, she led a pilot racehorse injury reporting project that eventually became the Jockey Club's Equine Injury Database, which compiles information for analysis to prevent and reduce racehorse injuries.

The New York Task Force on Racehorse Health and Safety will begin its work promptly and will provide a comprehensive review and report its findings and recommendations to NYRA, the Racing and Wagering Board and the public.

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