



MID-ATLANTIC  
STRATEGIC PLAN  

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TO REDUCE EQUINE FATALITIES

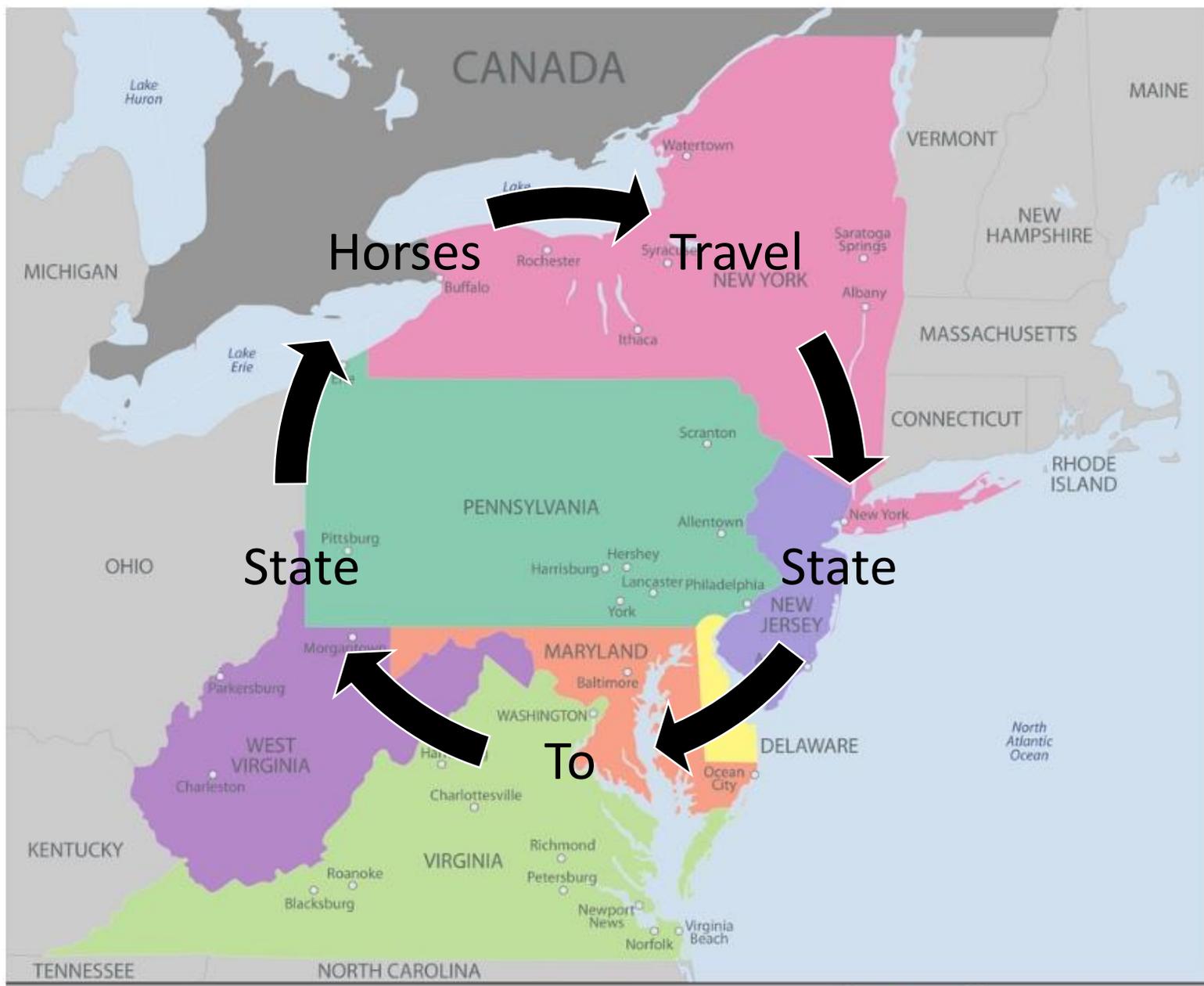
Alan M. Foreman, Esquire  
Chairman, Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association



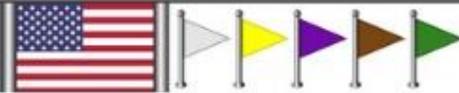
MID-ATLANTIC  
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TO REDUCE EQUINE FATALITIES

**The Mid-Atlantic Region  
Represents the Largest  
Concentration of Thoroughbred  
Racing in the U.S.**





# Mid-Atlantic States of the US



# New York Task Force on Racehorse Health and Safety



## OFFICIAL REPORT

Investigation of Equine Fatalities at  
Aqueduct 2011-2012 Fall/Winter Meet



## Lessons Learned

- Risk of injury is inherent in horse racing
- High rates of equine fatalities are not an inevitable
- Equine fatalities can be reduced by use of a real-time comprehensive risk-management program

*New York Task Force on Racehorse Health & Safety 2012*

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/archive/assets/documents/Report.pdf>



# Racing Risk Management

- Risk is a part of our daily lives.
- Racing Risk Management is an iterative (step-by-step) quality control process designed to reduce the risk of injury to horses and riders.
- The outcome of each step, taken in sequence, enables continual improvement toward our goal to minimize the incidence of equine fatalities at Mid Atlantic racetracks.





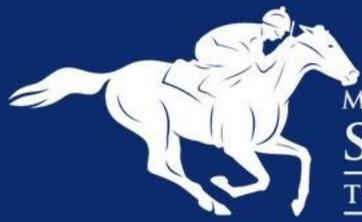
# Risk Management – Step 1

## Identify Risk

- Generic horse risk factors
- Generic racetrack risk factors
- Meet-specific risk factors
- Facility-specific risk factors

Identify applicable risk factors in all four areas.





# **Risk Management – Step 2**

## **Analysis of Risk**

- Prioritize identified risk factors
- Some risk factors are modifiable while others are not.
- Some risk factors are temporary while others are more permanent.
- Even fixed risk factors can be mitigated to some degree by protective factors.





## **Risk Management – Step 3**

### **“Treat” Risk**

- Design protective factors (interventions) that will mitigate risk.
- All 4 levels of risk must be addressed.
- Protocols/SOPs must be developed to ensure that the protective interventions are actually being implemented.





## **Risk Management – Step 4 Monitor & Review**

- Create outcome measures (metrics) to monitor the effect of the protective factors (interventions).
- The metrics should be transparent.
- Some metrics are more sensitive than others (injuries vs fatalities).
- Modify protective factors as necessary in order to effectively address risk over time.

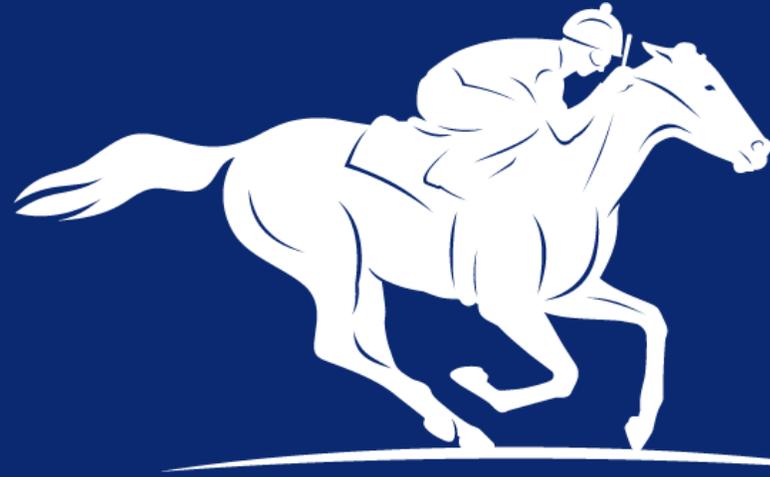
**Repeat Steps 1-4 in Real Time**



# Injury Clusters

- Once this 4-step plan is in place, unusual injury clusters may still occur.
- Why?
- Introduction of a new or previously un-identified risk factor
- Ask yourself: “What has changed?”
- Design & implement protective factor(s) to address that issue.





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# DEVELOPMENT

The Strategic Plan is modeled on the 2012 New York Task Force Report on Race Horse Health and Safety, which made 38 recommendations designed to reduce injuries in horses and riders on topics that include:

**Regulatory Veterinary Practices & Procedures**

**Necropsy & Review Board**

**Claiming Rules and Policies**

**Medication, Testing, Regulations**

**Equine Medical Director**

**Governance**

**Racing Surface and Weather Monitoring**

**Medical Records**

**Shockwave Therapy**



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# COALITION

**The Mid-Atlantic stakeholders and regulators who have committed to the Strategic Plan include:**

Delaware Park, DTHA, Delaware Racing Commission, Maryland Jockey Club, Maryland State Fair (Timonium), MTHA, Maryland Racing Commission, Maryland Horse Breeders Association, Monmouth Park, NJTHA, New Jersey Racing Commission, New Jersey Thoroughbred Breeders Association, Finger Lakes Racetrack, NYRA, Finger Lakes HBPA, NYTHA, New York State Gaming Commission, New York Thoroughbred Breeders Inc., Penn National Gaming, PARX, Presque Isle Downs, PATHA, Pennsylvania HBPA, Pennsylvania Racing Commission, Pennsylvania Horse Breeders Association, Colonial Downs, Virginia Racing Commission, Charles Town, Mountaineer Park, Charles Town HBPA, Mountaineer HBPA, West Virginia Racing Commission, and National Steeplechase Association.





# MISSION STATEMENT

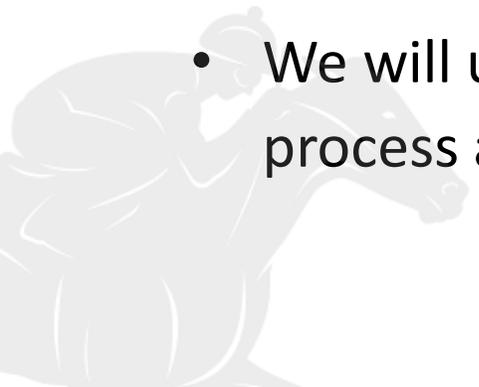
The mission of the Strategic Plan is to reduce exercise-based injuries and equine fatalities using evidence-based best practices applied in a collaborative multi-jurisdiction program that includes 14 Thoroughbred racetracks in seven states with approximately 90,000 starts per year.

The key components include the establishment of regional safety best practices, improved methods to identify horses at increased risk of injury, the implementation of protective factors to reduce the risk of injury, information sharing and communication, and improvement of the general health and welfare of the horse.



# CORE OPERATING VALUES

- We acknowledge that the horse is at the very core of our business model and we will dedicate our best efforts to minimize risk of injury
- Our commitment to stewardship of the horse is central to our mission
- These efforts will not only serve the horse, but will also minimize risk of injury of jockeys, exercise riders and backstretch workers
- We will use evidence-based decision making to assure the integrity of this process at every level





# UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- Equine and human safety is our “North Star”
- It is possible to reduce equine fatalities with evidence-based risk management protocols
- Informed decisions are made with the best interests of the horse in mind
- Best practices can be developed, and we must be willing to embrace change





# STRATEGIC DIRECTION

## **Mid-Atlantic Jurisdictions will:**

- Assume a leadership role in developing regional best practices for safety
- Enlist and leverage support of industry stakeholders and regulators and the world-wide scientific community
- Establish uniform best practices
- Educate racing stakeholders
- Communicate our efforts to the general public



# STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

**Goal I: Develop regional safety best practices**

**Goal II: Increase awareness and understanding of conditions associated with injury**

**Goal III: Develop improved methods to identify horses at increased risk of injury**

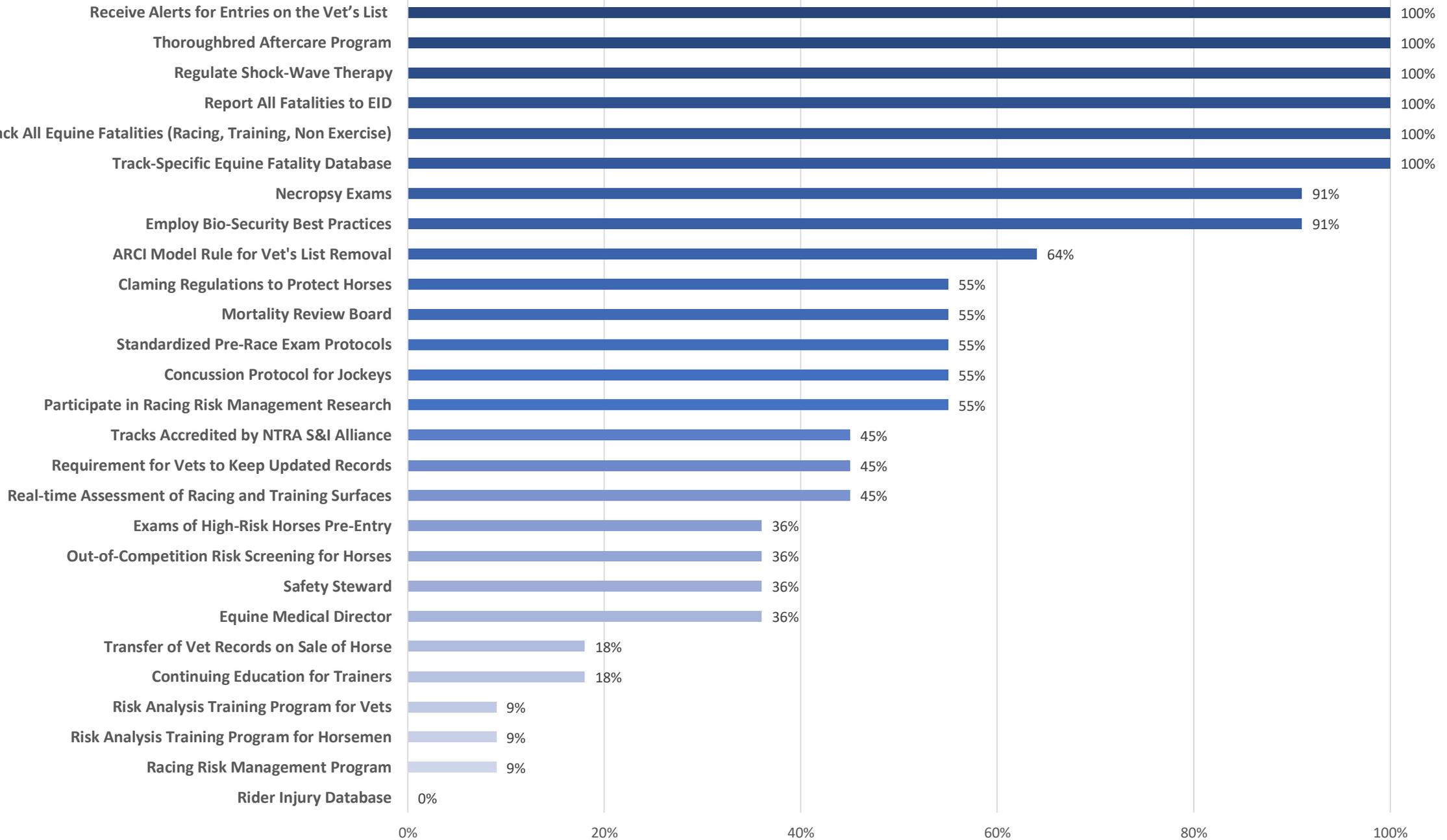
**Goal IV: Identify and implement protective factors that will reduce the risk of injury**

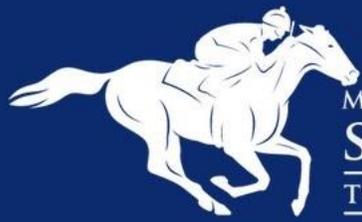
**Goal V: Improve general horse health**



# GAP ANALYSIS

# Gap Analysis





# STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEES

## **Administrative:**

Dr. Kathy Anderson  
Andy Belfiore  
Tom Chuckas  
Alan Foreman  
Mike Hopkins  
Joe Moore  
Duncan Patterson  
Dr. Scott Palmer

## **Racing Office:**

Allison De Luca  
John Heims  
Fred Hutton  
Eric Johnston  
Charlie McIntosh  
Chris Merz  
John Mooney  
David Osojnak  
Sal Sinatra

## **Racing Surfaces: (Jointly w/NTRA)**

Matt Iuliano  
Glen Kozak  
Dennis Moore  
Jim Pendergest  
Dr. Mick Peterson

## **Regulatory Veterinarian:**

Dr. Susan Botts  
Dr. Ada Caruthers  
Dr. Reynolds Cowles  
Dr. Elizabeth Daniels  
Dr. Scott Palmer  
Dr. Kathleen Picciano  
Dr. Anthony Verderosa



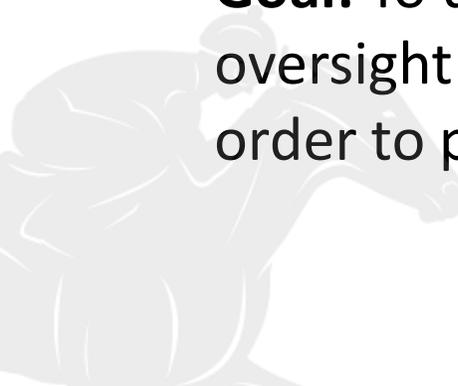
# BEST PRACTICES



# MORTALITY REVIEW BOARD

**Purpose:** To review the circumstances that may have contributed to every equine fatality, to monitor track safety and to identify and address anomalies in equine fatality rates

**Goal:** To use the information gathered from oversight and review to educate all stakeholders in order to prevent equine fatalities





# PRE-RACE INSPECTIONS

**Purpose:** To ensure that every horse is fit to compete on race day, using uniform and comprehensive protocols for pre-race inspection

**Goal:** To prevent horses with pre-existing conditions from experiencing catastrophic injury

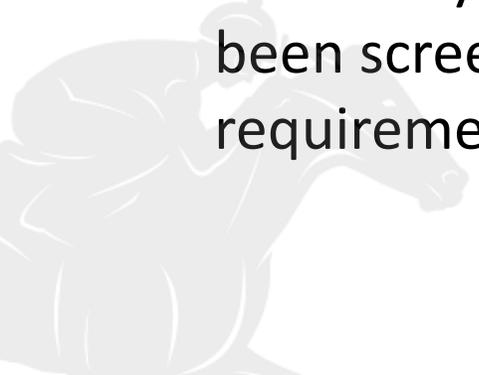




# THE RACING OFFICE

**Purpose:** To provide enhanced scrutiny of entries in the Racing Office

**Goal:** To create and adopt uniform standards for race entries to ensure that every horse entered to race has been screened and meets eligibility requirements





# SAFETY COMPLIANCE OFFICER

The Safety Compliance Officer (or Safety Steward) is responsible for ensuring that all activities and practices involving the training and racing of horses at the track meet required safety standards and regulatory guidelines.





# COMMUNICATIONS

**Purpose:** To ensure transparency and open communication, and to provide stakeholders with the tools to communicate effectively with fellow stakeholders, the media and the public

**Goal:** To present a positive and unified message from the racing industry





# PROJECT MANAGER

## Andy Belfiore

A native of Massachusetts, Andy Belfiore started her career in racing on the backstretch at Belmont Park, working as a hotwalker, groom, exercise rider and assistant trainer. After 10 years with the horses, she moved to the frontside at the track, and spent five years in the communications and marketing departments at NYRA. Belfiore left NYRA in 1993 to take the post as editor-in-chief at the *Thoroughbred Daily News*, a position she held for 18 years. She was named Director of Communications for NYTHA in December, 2011, and took over as Executive Director in 2015. Belfiore was named Project Manager of the Strategic Plan in September, 2019. She also serves as Executive Director of the TAKE2 Second Career Thoroughbred Program Inc., and is co-Chair of the Board of the Backstretch Employee Service Team.





# Racing Risk Management

- Reducing equine fatalities is a top priority for the Thoroughbred racing industry.
- Over the past 6 years the number of Mid-Atlantic equine fatalities has decreased 35% by using time-tested and evidence-based risk management techniques.



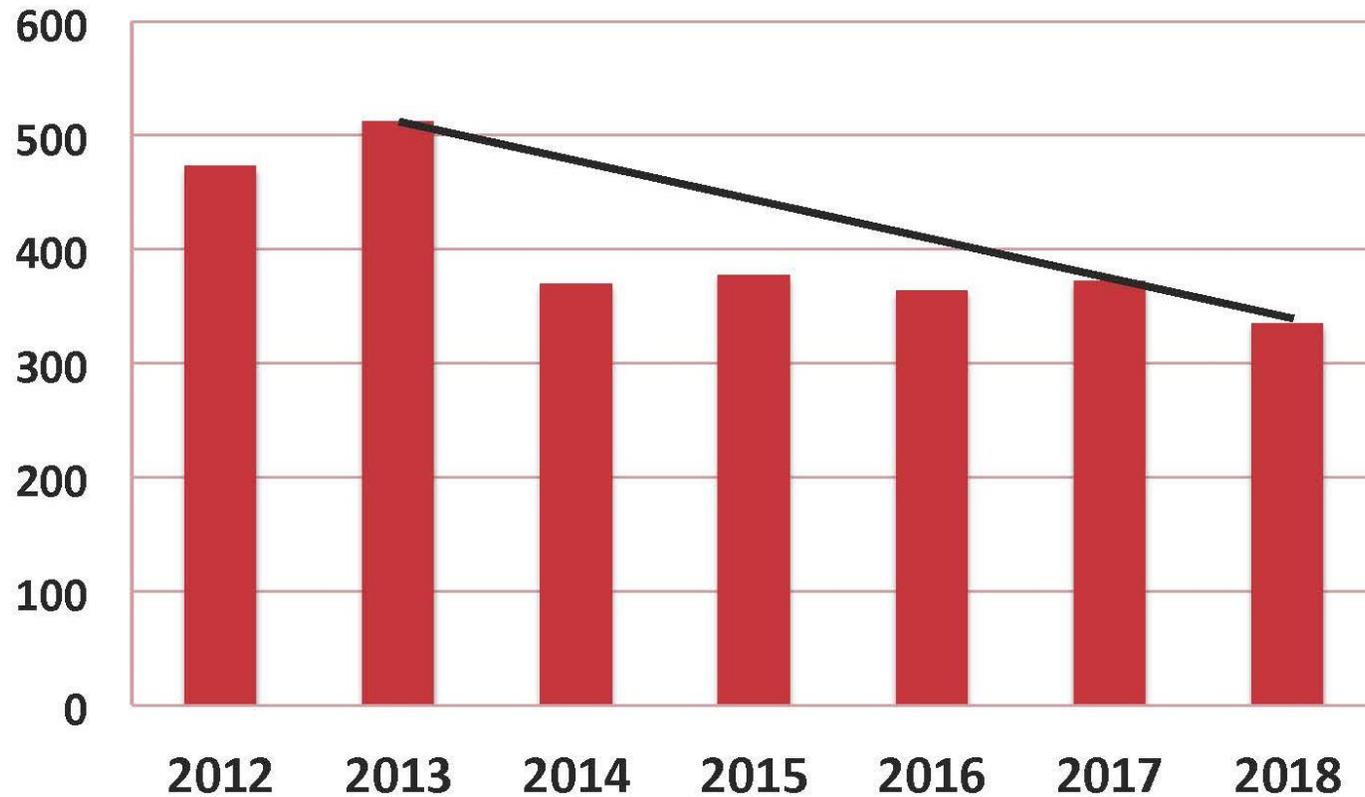


## SUMMARY

- The incidence of total equine fatalities at Mid-Atlantic racetracks 2013-2018 decreased by an average of 35% as a result of a collective effort to improve equine safety
- The incidence of Mid-Atlantic racing fatalities has approximated the national average for the past 3 years
- Some jurisdictions are doing better than others



# Mid-Atlantic Total Equine Fatalities 2012-2018



**35% Decrease 2013-2018**



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“Are we doing  
**everything**  
possible to protect  
the health, safety  
and welfare of the  
horse and rider?”

