pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[redacted]

Date of Birth: 3/8/03
Date of Incident: 8/9/14
Date of Oral Report: 8/9/14

FAMILY KNOWN or NOT KNOWN TO:

Monroe County Children and Youth Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

11/21/14

Unredacted reports are confidential under the provisions of the Child Protective Services Law and cannot be released to the public.
(23 Pa. C.S. Section 6340)

Unauthorized release is prohibited under penalty of law.
(23 Pa. C.S. 6349 (b))

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Reason for Review:

Senate Bill 1147, Printer's Number 2159 was signed into law on July 3, 2008. The bill became effective on December 30, 2008 and is known as Act 33 of 2008. As part of Act 33 of 2008, DPW must conduct a review and provide a written report of all cases of suspected child abuse that result in a child fatality or near fatality. This written report must be completed as soon as possible but no later than six months after the date the report was registered with ChildLine for investigation.

Act 33 of 2008 also requires that county children and youth agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a child fatality or near fatality is indicated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the oral report to ChildLine. Monroe County was not required to convene an Act 33 review team meeting due to the report being unfounded within 30 days.

Family Constellation:

Name:	Relationship:	Date of Birth:
[redacted]	Victim Child (VC)	3/8/03
	Mother	[redacted]/81
	Father/Caretaker	[redacted]/82
	sibling	[redacted]/01
	sibling	[redacted]/05

Notification of Child (Near) Fatality:

On August 9, 2014 the Monroe County Children and Youth Services (MCCYS) received a near fatality report. The report states that the father was playing in the car with child. The VC was hanging off the outside of the passenger door and the father was driving about 2 mph. The father noticed that the VC was gone; VC had fallen off the door. VC [redacted] Injuries to the VC's back appear as though VC may have been dragged by the car. [redacted]. It was found that VC has a [redacted]. No additional x-rays were done as the VC was transferred to a higher level of care. VC reports that the last thing she remembers is falling. The father does not know if he ran over the VC with the car or not but states that he did feel a "bump." Hospital is suspicious of VC abuse and/or neglect due to the fact that the VC could have died from the incident.

Summary of DPW Child (Near) Fatality Review Activities:

The Northeast Regional Office (NERO) investigation consisted of a review of the Child Protective Services (CPS) file, interviews with MCCYS staff, and a review of VC's medical records.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

This family was not known to MCCYS.

Circumstances of Child (Near) Fatality and Related Case Activity:

On August 9, 2014, MCCYS received a report [redacted] regarding the VC's injuries. The VC was brought to the hospital by her parents. The family reported that the child was hanging on to the door of the father's vehicle and the father was driving approximately 2 mph. The father turned to wave to neighbor children and then noticed the VC was gone. The father was unsure if he ran over the VC however does state that he did feel a "bump." Injuries to the VC included [redacted]

The VC was interviewed and reported that she and her brother were riding a new dirt bike on the road. The VC asked her father if she can hang on the door while he drove down the street. The father agreed and drove slowly while the VC hung on the door. The VC decided to jump off of the truck when she thought her father was going to drive up their driveway, which is a hill. The VC lost her footing when she jumped off, fell down and got run over by the truck. The VC stated that she had done this once before with her father. The VC also stated that her father picked her up and took her home. The VC had a hard time walking and felt like she broke something. The VC stated at one point everything "went black." The VC was able to get up and get water and her mother suggested that they go to the hospital.

The father was interviewed following an interview of the VC. The father stated that the VC and her brother were taking turns riding the dirt bike up and down the street. Father stated that the VC asked to hang on the door while he drove home and father agreed. The father stated he was driving slowly down the road and he waved to neighborhood kids who were playing in the yard. Father stated that he turned back and the VC was not there and then it felt like he hit a rock. The father got out of the truck and picked the VC up. The father panicked when the VC said that she could not move her legs. The father and mother then took VC to Pocono Medical Center [redacted]. The father did admit to doing this once before.

The other children in the home were also interviewed. The oldest sibling did witness the incident and reports the same account of events as the VC and father.

Medical records detail that the VC had a [redacted] but did not contain information that the VC's life was in danger at any time during the incident. The incident was determined to be accidental and the case was unfounded on August 28, 2014.

Current Case Status:

Law Enforcement completed their investigation and determined that the incident was accidental and closed their investigation.

After completion of the CPS investigation, the agency determined that the family was not in need of services and the case was closed.

County Strengths and Deficiencies and Recommendations for Change as Identified by the County's Child (Near) Fatality Report:

The county agency was not required to convene an Act 33 review team meeting as the CPS investigation was unfounded within 30 days.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The county agency was not required to convene an Act 33 review team meeting as the CPS investigation was unfounded within 30 days.

Department of Public Welfare Findings:

- County Strengths:

  The agency began their investigation timely and appropriately assessed safety of all of the children in the household.

  The agency completed a thorough investigation by interviewing all relevant parties and reviewing medical records.

  The agency concluded the CPS investigation in a timely manner.

- County Weaknesses:

  There are no noted areas of concern at this time.

- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance:

  MCCYS was in full compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements during this investigation.

Department of Public Welfare Recommendations:

The agency should continue to complete thorough and timely CPS investigations.