



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:



Date of Birth: 01/13/2012
Date of Incident: 12/06/2014
Date of Report: 12/06/2014

FAMILY KNOWN TO:

Venango County Children and Youth Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

September 3, 2015

This report is confidential under the provisions of the Child Protective Services Law and cannot be released.

(23 Pa. C.S. Section 6340)

Unauthorized release is prohibited under penalty of law.

(23 Pa. C.S. 6349 (b))

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, DHS 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. Venango County has convened a review team in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report.

Family Constellation:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	01/13/2013
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1987
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED] 1978
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED] 2010
[REDACTED]	Maternal Grandmother	Unknown

Notification of Child Fatality:

On December 6, 2014 a Child Protective Services (CPS) referral was received by Venango County Children and Youth Services. The referral indicated that the victim child, 23 months old, was transported to University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Northwest Emergency Room by his parents. The victim child was pale, vomiting and slow to respond. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The victim child was transported via medical helicopter to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP). The physician at CHP was unsure if the child would survive [REDACTED]

Summary of DHS Child Fatality Review Activities:

The Western Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (WROCYF) obtained and reviewed all current and past case records pertaining to the family. Conversations were held between the Venango County Children and

Youth Services caseworker and WROCYF Human Services Program Representative on several occasions. WROCYF participated in the Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Team Meeting on December 30, 2014.

Summary of Services to Family:

The case was opened for ongoing services to the family on February 4, 2015. They were offered [REDACTED]. The family did not agree to [REDACTED] but are compliant with the other services.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

The mother's previous involvement with Venango County Children and Youth Services has been minimal. On 12/17/2010, a General Protective Services (GPS) report was received regarding a newborn sibling. The mother had positive lab results of [REDACTED]. The mother did have a [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] but not for [REDACTED]. The mother admitted to using [REDACTED] for severe back pain. She did go to the emergency room for relief, but they stated nothing was wrong and sent her home. She did not check with her doctor prior to taking the [REDACTED]. The victim child's sibling did not have [REDACTED] although the doctors did notice some [REDACTED].

Venango County Children and Youth Services did complete a medication check for the [REDACTED]. The mother did move in with her mother for a short period of time. She appeared to be caring for the infant effectively and did not appear to be under the influence of any substances during any of the caseworker visits. This incident was closed at intake.

The father has an indicated report for physical abusing an eleven year old child who was not his biological child on March 8, 2007. Venango County Children and Youth Services investigated an allegation he hit a child in the face knocking a tooth out, which was not previously loose. The child did require medical attention and [REDACTED] for pain.

The father also has reports open with two other children. He is not married to the mother and is unpredictable in their lives. This involvement dates back to 2002. A General Protective Services referral came into Venango County Children and Youth Services stating that the child's father was violent and had hit him in the past. The referral source was concerned for the child's safety. The child was "ripped" out of the house, grabbed by the wrists, and thrown into a car. The father supposedly "torched" the child's bike due to him riding his bike to his aunt's house without permission. The Venango County caseworker assessing the case noticed a bicycle outside that was in half. Due to the father's inconsistent relationship with members in the

household, it is not clear when he left that household. This report was closed at intake.

Circumstances of Child Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:

On 12/06/14, this case became known to both Venango County Children and Youth Services and the WROCYF. The victim child arrived at UPMC Northwest with his parents. He was examined and then was flown via medical helicopter to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP). While at CHP the Allegheny County caseworker went to the hospital to interview the parents as a courtesy for Venango County. The Allegheny County caseworker talked with both parents, neither parent could definitively say what happened to cause the injuries.

On 12/07/2014, Venango County caseworker traveled to CHP to see the child and the family. A safety plan was put into place to keep the sibling safe which placed the siblings at the maternal grandparents home and only supervised visitation with the parents. Safety and Risk Assessments were also completed. The parents did sign the safety plan. The Venango County caseworker met with Dr. [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] to discuss the victim child's condition. [REDACTED]

On 12/09/2014, victim child [REDACTED] to his maternal grandmother, as per the safety plan. The treating physician at CHP recommended that the child have a follow-up appointment [REDACTED]

The Venango County Children and Youth Services caseworker completed announced and unannounced home visits on 12/19/2014 in the morning and afternoon to ensure safety plan was being followed.

On 12/22/14, a forensic interview was held with the sibling. The sibling was inconsolable during the interview and was not able to be interviewed.

On 12/23/2014, the family, along with the Venango County Children and Youth Services caseworker, attended a follow-up visit at CHP. [REDACTED] From 12/24/2014 thru 01/15/2015, there were numerous phone calls and some announced and unannounced home visits. The Venango County Children and Youth Services caseworker interviewed the father again and discussed his indicated ChildLine report from 2007.

On 01/15/2015, the Venango County Children and Youth Services caseworker transported both parents and child to CHP for a follow-up visit. [REDACTED]

From 01/15/2015 to 02/04/2015, many announced and unannounced home visits occurred with the family to ensure adherence to the established safety plan. There were also phone calls and collateral contacts.

On 02/04/2015 the CY 48 was completed pending criminal charges and the report was upgraded to indicated status on April 23, 2015.

Current Case Status:

The family continues to reside in Venango County. They are open with ongoing services as of February 4, 2015. The victim child [REDACTED] to his maternal grandmother along with his sibling. Charges are pending with the local law enforcement.

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

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. Venango County Children and Youth Services has convened a review team in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report.

- Strengths: Willingness to work with the agency. Maternal grandmother willing to provide safety for the children.
- Deficiencies: Parents have a history of drug abuse. Father has a significant criminal history.
- Recommendations for Change at the Local Level: Nothing was recommended by the county.
- Recommendations for Change at the State Level: Nothing was recommended by the county.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

Venango County Children and Youth Services county internal report was received February 23, 2015 by the WROCYF. The report detailed the case activity and provided strengths and deficiencies in the case investigation.

Department of Human Services Findings:

- County Strengths: The Venango County Children and Youth Services caseworker made numerous unannounced visits to the grandmother's home to ensure that the safety plan was being adhered to fully.
- County Weaknesses: None were identified.
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance:

No statutory and regulatory issues were determined.

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

None