



REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY

[REDACTED]

Date of Birth: 04/25/1999
Date of Incident: 08/30/2016
Report to ChildLine: 09/01/2016
CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]

**FAMILY KNOWN TO COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENCY AT TIME OF
INCIDENT OR WITHIN THE PRECEDING 16 MONTHS:**

Columbia County Children and Youth Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON:
02/09/2017

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. Section 6349 (b))

Reason for Review:

Pursuant to the Child Protective Services Law, the Department, through OCYF, must conduct a review and provide a written report of all cases of suspected child abuse that result in a 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.

The Child Protective Services Law also requires that county children and youth agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a fatality or near fatality is substantiated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the report to ChildLine.

Columbia County Children and Youth submitted an unfounded report to ChildLine on 09/26/2016 which was within the 30 days of the report. Therefore, a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law was not held.

Family Constellation:

First and Last Name:

[Redacted]
* [Redacted]
* [Redacted]
* [Redacted]

Relationship:

Victim Child
Paternal Step Grandmother
Paternal Grandfather
Father
Mother
Household Member
Cousin

Date of Birth:

04/25/1999
[Redacted] 1955
[Redacted] 1931
[Redacted] 1975
[Redacted] 1970
Unknown
[Redacted] 1998

*Denotes an individual that is not a household member or did not live in the home at the time of the incident, but is relevant to the report.

Summary of OCYF Child Near Fatality Review Activities:

The Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (CRO) obtained and reviewed all case records pertaining to the family, which included medical records and the agency casework dictation that outlined contact with the family. A discussion occurred with the agency administrator and agency casework supervisors.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

Columbia County Children and Youth Services (CCCYS) first became involved with this family on 06/20/2002 when the child’s mother was involved in a shooting in [Redacted], Pennsylvania. When mother returned from [Redacted] on 10/16/2002, she was incarcerated. Mother asked the paternal grandfather to care for the child due to her incarceration. At that time, the paternal grandfather gained legal and physical custody of his grandson.

CCCYS received a General Protective Services (GPS) referral on 04/11/2011 for inappropriate physical discipline. The referral stated the child was living with his paternal grandfather and paternal step grandmother. The agency investigated the referral which was unsubstantiated. The agency learned that the child and paternal grandparents have been receiving services through [REDACTED] for the child's behaviors. The agency closed the case on 06/10/2011.

CCCYS received a GPS referral on 11/19/2012 for child behaviors. The child was still residing with his paternal grandparents and still receiving services through CMSU. The agency closed the case on 01/18/2013.

CCCYS received a GPS referral on 01/28/2014 for child behaviors. The child was placed in foster care through [REDACTED] on 03/20/2014 at which time CCCYS closed their case on that same day.

CCCYS received a [REDACTED] on 09/09/2015 stating the child is out of control, lies and is defiant. Child has been at [REDACTED] in the past. Child has attacked paternal step grandmother three times and has been in foster care through [REDACTED]. CCCYS opened the case at this time and began providing on-going general protective services to the child and his family. The child and family were receiving services through [REDACTED]. CCCYS was making monthly visits to the home, and the child and paternal grandparents were given information about [REDACTED] and was taken to [REDACTED] for a tour.

On 05/23/2016, CCCYS received a report that the minor child had been [REDACTED] due to the paternal grandparents not participating in [REDACTED] reportedly not being able to provide the child with adequate services he may need.

Circumstances of Child Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:

Columbia County Children and Youth Services (CCCYS) received a Child Protective Services referral [REDACTED] on 09/01/2016 for allegations of causing bodily injury to a child through recent act/failure to act. The report stated the following: the victim child resides with his paternal step grandmother and has been with her since he was three years old. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] but victim child remains in the home with paternal grandparents. It was reported that victim child has a history of suicide attempts. Victim child [REDACTED] in May 2016 for homicidal and suicidal threats. Paternal step grandmother was told that victim child's [REDACTED] needs to be locked up. The paternal step grandmother has not been locking up the [REDACTED]

On Tuesday evening, 08/30/2016, the victim child took five pills and told his paternal step grandmother, "see look what you made me do." The victim child took five more pills and the paternal step grandmother told the victim child to keep going. The victim child took a total of forty pills [REDACTED]. The paternal step grandmother was there with the victim child for the duration of the incident and did not stop victim child or intervene when victim child was taking the pills. During the incident, victim child called and texted his cousin, stating he was going to kill himself. The victim child went into his bedroom for a period of time. The paternal step grandmother found the victim child unresponsive and then dialed 911. The police came to the home. The victim child was life flighted to the Lehigh Valley Medical Center where he was admitted [REDACTED].

CCCYS contacted Lehigh County Children and Youth on the day the referral was received and requested a 24 hour courtesy contact be made. Lehigh County agreed to make contact and information was shared between the two agencies. Also on that same day, the paternal grandfather contacted CCCYS and stated that the victim child did this not because of the paternal step grandmother but because the victim child's gay lover doesn't want anything to do with him.

CCCYS contacted the Lehigh Valley Hospital on 09/02/2016 and was informed that the victim child will open his eyes when his name is said but will not follow commands. [REDACTED] the victim child is breathing on his own and seems to be hallucinating at times.

On 09/02/2016, CCCYS received a supplemental referral stating the following: the paternal step grandmother said that she watched the child take over [REDACTED] on 08/30/2016 from 10:00PM to 11:30PM. The paternal step grandmother told the referral source that she watched the child take the pills, five at a time as he told the paternal step grandmother, "see, I'm taking more." The paternal step grandmother said that she thought the child would stop on his own and she did not think that the pills would hurt him. The paternal step grandmother did not contact 911 until after the child had gone unresponsive. The paternal step grandmother said she took pictures of the pills and sent them to someone before calling 911.

CCCYS made contact with the paternal step grandmother on 09/06/2016 and the following is her account of what happened. The paternal step grandmother disclosed that the child took [REDACTED] around 11:30PM. The paternal step grandmother explained that she was in the bedroom and the paternal grandfather was in the living room watching television. The child went out for a walk at approximately 9:45PM and the paternal step grandmother asked the child, "don't you think that it's a little too late for that?" The child left the home and did not return until 11:00PM. The paternal step grandmother stated that she is not sure how the child got his [REDACTED]. The paternal step grandmother explained that she locks [REDACTED] and knives in her bedroom. The paternal step grandmother said that she threw out all of the child's old [REDACTED] and does not know where the child got it or how he ended up with them. The paternal step grandmother said that the child has not been on [REDACTED] since March or April of 2016. The

paternal step grandmother said that her son called the ambulance and she got a picture of the pile of pills from the child. The paternal step grandmother saw that the child had four pills in his hand and took them in front of her. The paternal step grandmother said that she asked the child several times what he was taking but the child refused to tell her. The paternal step grandmother said that the child did say that he was depressed about stuff but he never told her that he wanted to end his life. The paternal step grandmother denied anyone witnessing the child take all those pills except for the last four pills.

On that same day, [REDACTED] came to the agency to tell their version of what happened. [REDACTED] claimed that the victim child texted him that he was going to take pills and sent him a picture of the pills. [REDACTED] said that he then contacted the paternal step grandmother and she said she was going in the victim child's room to check on him. [REDACTED] then said that he contacted his father and they were going to the victim child's home. On the way to the home; they called the ambulance. [REDACTED] said he received the text with the pills around 11:08PM and provided the text to CCCYS. [REDACTED] said that he was in the living room and the paternal step grandmother was in the back bedroom and he could hear the paternal step grandmother ask the child what he took. [REDACTED] reported that he found a pill bottle in the room later that evening but it was hidden in the room. [REDACTED] reported that they are not sure where he got [REDACTED] since he was in and out of the house in the evening. [REDACTED] said that they lock the child's [REDACTED] in a lock box in their bedroom.

On 09/07/2016, CCCYS went to the Lehigh Valley Medical Hospital to see the victim child in regards to the incident. The victim child admitted that he was depressed after admitting to his paternal step grandmother that he was gay and she told him, "that is not who he is." The victim child admitted that he took [REDACTED] from the top of the fridge, dumped the pills on his bed, and texted the picture to his cousin. The victim child said that he did go for a walk that night. The victim child denied that his paternal step grandmother saw him take all the pills. The victim child said that he took a handful of pills in less than a minute and his paternal step grandmother only saw him take the last four pills. The victim child admitted that his paternal step grandmother asked him what he took and he refused to tell her. The victim child said that he did not know where his current [REDACTED] were; he believed that his grandparents had them hidden somewhere in their bedroom. During this contact, the victim child asked if he could return home with his grandparents so he could be with his family.

The victim child stayed at the Lehigh Valley Medical Hospital until 09/13/2016 at which time he was transferred to [REDACTED]. CCCYS saw the child a second time on 09/22/2016 [REDACTED]. The victim child stated basically the same information that he shared during the first interview on 09/07/2016. He denied that his paternal step grandmother saw him take all the pills but the last three or four pills. CCCYS unfounded this case on 09/26/2016 and submitted their outcome to ChildLine that same day.

CCCYS did contact the [REDACTED] Police Department on 09/01/2016 to report the numbered abuse. CCCYS communicated with the police department throughout their investigation. [REDACTED] Police Department did not file charges against the paternal step grandmother and closed their case.

On 10/07/2016, the victim child was [REDACTED] to the home of the paternal grandparents [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The agency continues to stay involved with this child and his paternal grandparents [REDACTED]

On 12/08/2016, the victim child attempted to hang himself. He was admitted to First Hospital until 12/19/2016 [REDACTED] of his paternal grandparents. The family continues to receive [REDACTED] services through [REDACTED] for family based services as well as the [REDACTED] CCCYS provides on going general protective services to the family [REDACTED]

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

Strengths in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families:

CCCYS did not have an Act 33 meeting and no report was submitted.

Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families:

CCCYS did not have an Act 33 meeting and no report was submitted.

Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse:

CCCYS did not have an Act 33 meeting and no report was submitted.

Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies:

CCCYS did not have an Act 33 meeting and no report was submitted.

Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse:

CCCYS did not have an Act 33 meeting and no report was submitted.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (CRO) obtained and reviewed all case records pertaining to the family, which included medical records and the agency casework dictation that outlined contact with the family. A discussion occurred with the agency administrator and agency casework supervisors.

Department of Human Services Findings:

County Strengths:

The agency responded to the referral immediately and requested a courtesy from Lehigh County CYS to see the child.

Agency personnel communicated well with law enforcement.

The agency completed their investigation within 30 days and submitted the appropriate paperwork timely.

The agency worked well with [REDACTED] and was actively involved with the child's discharge plan.

County Weaknesses:

None weaknesses noted.

Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency:

After review of the file, the agency was found to be in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

The investigation was completed in a timely manner by Columbia County Children and Youth Services. Columbia County Children and Youth Services has a good relationship with their [REDACTED] providers as well as their courts. The recommendation would be to continue that relationship by including those system providers to participate in their local roundtable.