



## **REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:**

[REDACTED]

**Date of Birth: 06/16/2016**  
**Date of Incident: 9/24/2016**  
**Date of Report to ChildLine: 09/25/2016**  
**CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]**

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

Beaver County Children and Youth Services

**REPORT FINALIZED ON:**  
04/03/2017

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.

Beaver County has convened a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The county review team was convened on 10/20/2016.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	06/16/2016
[REDACTED]	Biological Mother	[REDACTED] 1995
[REDACTED]	Biological Father	[REDACTED] 1995
[REDACTED]	Paternal Grandmother	[REDACTED] 1964
[REDACTED]	Maternal Grandmother	[REDACTED] 1965
[REDACTED]	Half-Sibling	[REDACTED] 2013
* [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Biological Father	[REDACTED] 1995

\* 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 Western Region Office of Children Youth and Family Services reviewed the case and casework activities regarding the current referral and previous referrals and participated in the Beaver County Act 33 Review team meeting held on 10/20/2016.

**Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:**

The family was previously referred to Beaver County Children and Youth Services (BCCYS) three times since 2014. The family was first accepted for services on 02/22/2014 due to concerns of unstable housing and supervision concerns. Although family and friend supports were attempted to be utilized the mother and the father continued to have difficulty in providing the basic necessities for their youngest child. [REDACTED] for a brief time by the mother. The

mother, the father and the child then resided with family again at which time BCCYS completed a Family Service Plan and began to address goals with the family.

On 07/18/2014, a Child Protective Services (CPS) report was received by BCCYS stating the half-sibling sustained suspicious injuries that did not match the explanation provided by the mother and the father. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The step-parent was charged and incarcerated for approximately four months. The child was placed in her biological father's care and has remained safely there since the incident occurred. The mother was indicated for physical abuse as was the step-parent.

On 03/23/2015, BCCYS again accepted the family for services. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mother was given supervised visits three days a week. The visits were supervised by the maternal grandmother. Beaver County asked the mother to complete parenting classes, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The mother completed parenting classes, [REDACTED] but never completed [REDACTED] She stated she was addressing [REDACTED] but it is unclear if this was occurring. The mother, per BCCYS, was consistently difficult to contact during this time with the agency. The case remained open through the time of the current incident, prompting this near fatality report on 09/25/2016.

### **Circumstances of Child Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:**

While active with the family, BCCYS received information that the mother had given birth to the victim child on 06/16/2016 while the county continued to provide services [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The agency continued to have difficulty maintaining contact with both parents. The agency received a near fatality report from [REDACTED] on 09/25/2016 stating the victim child [REDACTED]

The parents were involved in an auto accident on 09/24/2016 and reported the injuries were caused as a result. The accident involved a police vehicle. The mother reported the victim child was examined by a paramedic and did not present with injuries. On 09/25/2016, the victim child was observed by her parents as not being able to move her left side. The mother contacted the hospital and was informed to have her seen medically. The family initially went to a local hospital [REDACTED] and while being examined the victim child began vomiting and seizing. The victim child was then taken by helicopter to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. The police report and photos were reviewed by medical staff. It was determined the injuries presented on 09/25/2016 "in no way" were consistent with the minor auto accident. [REDACTED] Detectives met with the mother and the father who again stated the injuries were a result of the accident. The mother then provided the victim child had been hit in the head with an ashtray and had fallen off the bed and

couch recently. The parents provided multiple accounts regarding the ashtray causing the injuries and then requested to speak to an attorney.

A full skeletal survey took place on 10/03/2016, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The victim child was placed with her paternal grandmother on 10/11/2016.

BCCYS indicated the physical abuse allegations on 10/12/2016 and then upgraded the report to a founded report on 10/27/2016 after a finding of abuse was granted by the Juvenile Court. The investigation named the victim child's mother perpetrator by commission and the father as perpetrator by omission of causing bodily injury to a child through a recent act or failure to act. The parents have been requested to participate [REDACTED] along with parenting instruction. The mother did admit to shaking the victim child while being upset with the father [REDACTED]

On 10/26/2016, the mother was arrested and charged with attempted homicide, aggravated assault, endangering the welfare of a child and recklessly endangering another person. She was incarcerated and is awaiting trial.

The victim child continues to attend follow-up appointments [REDACTED] services are being provided.

**Summary of 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; Beaver County Children and Youth Services collaborated with [REDACTED] Detectives Bureau and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Child Advocacy Center to conduct a thorough investigation. The agencies were all quick to respond.
- Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families; Due to HIPPA restrictions, there is limited information that can be provided to BCCYS regarding parent's [REDACTED]
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse; Protocol that outlines what steps would be taken for any cases where caseworkers are unable to gain entry into client homes as required based on the child(ren)'s age and risk tag.

- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies: None provided.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse: None provided.

### **Department Review of County Internal Report:**

The review of the County Internal report notes limited information regarding the current incident and surrounding information. The recommendations concerning gaining entrance to a residence to assess all children when denied is concerning in that a protocol has, per the recommendations, never been initiated. The other noted deficiency listed is also concerning in that the agency continues to have barriers in obtaining parent's [REDACTED] while the agency is servicing a family.

### **Department of Human Services Findings:**

- County Strengths:
  - The County presented a collaborated Act 33 meeting with medical, law enforcement and provider agencies. The County was prompt in responding to the report.
- County Weaknesses:
  - As noted above, inconsistent contact and irregular access to the family home after the victim child's birth was noted as a deficiency. This is echoed by the Department as the child was being cared for by a parent with a previous indicated finding for physical abuse of her older child. It is concerning as to what, if any, discussion was had regarding the legal options that Beaver County could have initiated to ensure more consistent and regular access was occurring with the victim child after her birth.
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency. No statutory regulations were noted.

### **Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

The Department would recommend when unable to gain access or when having ongoing non-compliance in physically seeing children while providing services, to request law enforcement assistance or to discuss filing a motion to compel or a Petition for Dependency if the family continues be uncooperative. The Department would also recommend when continued non-compliance is ongoing, but services have been court ordered through another branch of the court system, the agency should present these ongoing difficulties and request a modification to the court order.