



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

[REDACTED]

**Date of Birth:** 10/15/2016  
**Date of Incident:** 12/20/2016-12/21/2016  
**Date of Report to ChildLine:** 12/22/2016  
**CWIS Referral ID:** [REDACTED]

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

BERKS COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

**REPORT FINALIZED ON:**  
07/25/2017

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.

Berks County convened a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The county review team was convened on 01/03/2017.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>First and Last Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	10/15/2016
[REDACTED]	Biological Mother	[REDACTED] 1995
[REDACTED]	Biological Father	[REDACTED] 1996
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED] 2016
[REDACTED]	Half-Sibling	[REDACTED] 2013
[REDACTED]	Half-Sibling	[REDACTED] 2015
[REDACTED]	Maternal Grandmother	[REDACTED] 1973
[REDACTED]	Maternal Step Grandfather	[REDACTED] 1971

**Summary of OCYF Child Near Fatality Review Activities:**

The Southeast Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families (SERO) obtained and reviewed all current and past case records pertaining to the family. Follow up interviews were conducted with the caseworker. The regional office also participated in the Act 33 Team meeting held on 01/03/2017 where the history of the case and chronological documentations were presented by Berks County Children and Youth Service’s team. The assigned SERO Program representative continued working with the County team and the Berks County detectives obtaining and sharing information.

**Summary of Circumstances Prior to Incident:**

The family was known to Berks County Children and Youth Services (BCCYS). The victim child has a twin sister, one 2-year-old half-brother and one 4-year-old half-sister (who are with their respective biological fathers). There was a previous general protective services (GPS) investigation on 02/23/2016 with concerns that mother was smoking marijuana and unclean living conditions. These concerns were not validated and the case was closed at the intake level on 03/24/2016.

Another GPS report was received on 10/15/16 with concerns that the victim child and sibling tested positive for THC at birth. These concerns were determined to be valid but the case was not open for services because the report was investigated at an intake level and mother was able to provide a clean urine for the caseworker.

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

The victim child was taken to Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) on 12/22/2016, to be evaluated after her twin sister was [REDACTED] the hospital on 12/20/2016, suffering from serious injuries as a result of suspected child abuse. The twin sister was found to have [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] At the finding of these significant injuries, the victim child and her half-siblings were medically examined.

The victim child’s exam determined that she had bruises on her face, back and chest. [REDACTED]

The victim child’s older half-sibling had bruising on his face and ear [REDACTED] was completed on him as well. [REDACTED] He also had a full skeletal survey that came back negative. The victim child’s other half-sibling also had [REDACTED] which all came back as unremarkable.

The parents were also no longer allowed unsupervised contact with any of mother’s children. Due to the severity of the children’s injuries, [REDACTED] the two older children while they reside with their biological fathers who were determined to be a resource for the children. [REDACTED] the twins and placed them in a medical foster home [REDACTED] The children are receiving [REDACTED] and are being monitored medically by a local pediatrician.

Mother and father were interviewed at CHOP on 12/21/2016, by law enforcement and made no admission of guilt. On 12/29/2016, mother and father met their caseworker to go over paperwork [REDACTED] During this meeting, mother made an admission to caseworker that she had both twins in the same car seat and was carrying them down her bedroom stairs when she fell. Mother reported that the twins did not fall out of the seat but did get “smacked around”. Mother reported that they cried momentarily but then seemed to be fine. Caseworker questioned the mother about the healing injuries, but mother could offer no explanation. Caseworker relayed the mother’s revelation of the information to the county detectives. On 12/30/2016, the caseworker called [REDACTED] to query the possibility of the twins sustaining injuries from their mother falling down the stairs while carrying both children in the same car seat. [REDACTED] indicated that a fall down stairs could not explain the healing injuries located on the child. He also stated that it is “highly unlikely” that the

twins would sustain such major injuries even if they were thrown out of the car seat and questioned the logistics behind how the twins were specifically placed in one car seat.

The mother was arrested on 01/30/2017 for multiple counts of aggravated assault and endangering the welfare of children and is awaiting trial. There has been no charges filed against the father at this time.

On 02/17/2017, BCCYS determined that there was substantial evidence identifying both the mother and father as responsible for the injuries suffered by the victim child and her twin sister.

**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.  
There was collaboration between the County Children and youth agency and the County detectives. The County was also able to locate the fathers of the two half siblings as resources preventing them from being placed in a foster home.
- Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families.  
NONE
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse;  
NONE
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies;  
NONE
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse.  
NONE

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

The County report was received on 03/24/2017. The Department is in agreement with the County report.

**Department of Human Services Findings:**

- County Strengths:  
The County collaborated very well with the hospital personnel. They collected all medical records and continued to maintain contact with the detectives until the alleged Perpetrators were identified.
- County Weaknesses:  
NONE
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency.  
NONE

**Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

There are no recommendations based on this review.