



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

[REDACTED]

**Date of Birth:** 07/28/2017

**Date of Incident:** 10/02/2017

**Date of Report to ChildLine:** 10/02/2017

**CWIS Referral ID:** [REDACTED]

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

Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families

### **REPORT FINALIZED ON:**

04/09/2018

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 Office of Children, Youth, and Families (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.

Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families (ACOCYF) did not have to convene a review team. The report was unfounded within 30 days of the date of oral report of suspected child abuse which was 10/02/2017.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	02/28/2017
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1979
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED] 1979
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED] 2013
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED] 2010

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

The Western Region Office of Children Youth and Family Services (WRO) obtained and reviewed all current records and medical records pertaining to the family.

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

The family was not known to ACOCYF prior to the incident that occurred on 10/02/2017.

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

On 10/02/2017, ACOCYF received a report of suspected child abuse on the victim child. The victim child was brought to Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP) via ambulance after mother contacted 911, due to her accidentally falling with the victim child. She tripped over the family pet, which resulted in the victim child striking his forehead on the floor. Upon examination the victim child was found to [REDACTED] The victim child had a skeletal survey which was negative. [REDACTED] that the victim child’s injuries were suspicious and were not consistent with the explanation provided by the mother. The victim child was admitted into the [REDACTED] for observation and was reportedly in serious condition resulting in [REDACTED] physician certifying the victim child’s case as a near fatality.

The ACOCYF agency caseworker initially spoke with the [REDACTED] who provided detailed information as to how the victim child was brought into the hospital. Along with the mother's account of how the victim child obtained the injuries. [REDACTED] reported that the mother explained that the victim child cried immediately after falling, there was no loss of consciousness nor vomiting.

The mother and the father were both present at the hospital and the victim child's siblings were at home; however, it was unknown at that time who was watching the siblings. At the time, it was believed to be the paternal grandmother, as it was reported that she watches the children regularly. [REDACTED] also reported that there was concern for non-accidental trauma. [REDACTED] reported later in the evening on 10/02/2017, that the [REDACTED] the victim child's injuries were consistent with the explanation that was provided by the mother and there were no concerns of physical maltreatment. [REDACTED] physician's professional opinion varied from the [REDACTED] physician.

The caseworker later spoke with the [REDACTED] physician who stated that the information provided by [REDACTED] was "incorrect." [REDACTED], the victim child [REDACTED] which were generally indicative of a child falling from a distance which was waist high; however, based on the mother's accounting of the event and how the child reportedly fell would not have caused [REDACTED], which are generally found in children that were shaken. The [REDACTED] informed the caseworker that the victim child had been referred to CHP's Child Advocacy Center (CAC), whose physicians are the experts in this type of head trauma.

On 10/03/2017, the ACOCYF caseworker went to CHP to complete an assessment with the family and to speak with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the victim child's injuries were consistent with the story that the mother provided and there was little concern for abuse and/or neglect. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] physician stated that she did not feel that the report should have been classified as a near fatality as the victim child was never in critical condition as a result of the alleged abuse. The victim child never lost consciousness nor did he have any respiratory distress.

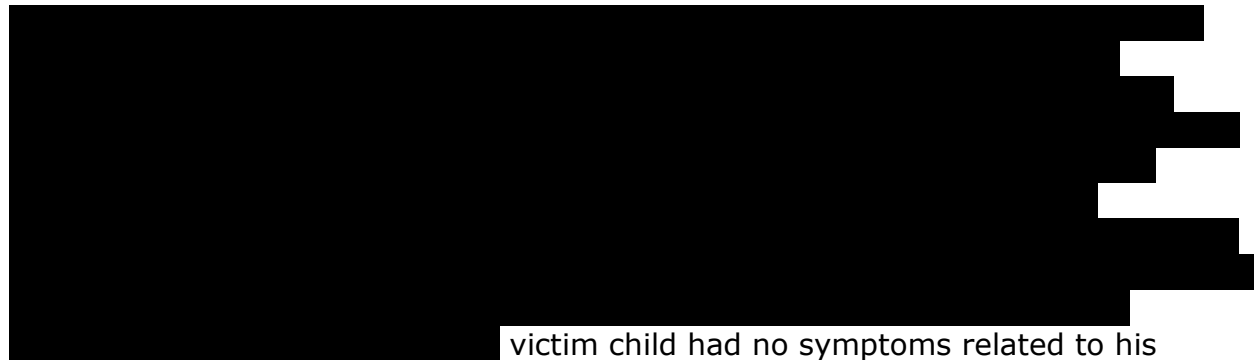
The caseworker completed an assessment with the mother. The mother reported that she and the victim child had just finished a bottle at 1:45 PM, after which they

proceeded to go get the mail with the victim child in her arms. She said that she got the mail at around 2:15 PM and reported she came back into her home and walked up the 4-5 stairs that she has in her home to get to the main level. She went into the kitchen to sit the mail down. The dog was lying near the stove in the kitchen and she stepped over the dog to get to the table to separate the mail. She turned around must have forgotten that the dog was there and she fell with the victim child in her arms. The victim child flipped out of her arms and landed facedown into the living room. The mother reported that she threw her body beside the victim child, so that she did not fall onto him. She said that the victim child cried immediately and she immediately picked him up and set him on the couch and checked him over to see if he had any injuries. She said that she called 911 at 2:18 PM and the Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) arrived at her home at 2:23 PM.

The father was also assessed on 10/03/2017. The father was at work during the time of incident and only received a call from the mother at approximately 2:15 PM stating that she had tripped over the dog and the victim child flipped out of her arms. He reported that the mother was "frantic" and was asking him what she should do.

The victim child's 7-year-old sibling was interviewed at the hospital. The sibling reported that she was not present at the time of incident and was at school. She did not disclose any maltreatment.

The victim child's 4-year-old sibling was also interviewed at the hospital. This child did reported any maltreatment.



victim child had no symptoms related to his injuries. If the mother had not called 911 because the victim child was crying after the fall, they would likely have never known the injury occurred and it would have resolved on its own.

The ACOCYF caseworker completed a home assessment on 10/04/2017 and observed the children in the home. The caseworker found the home to be appropriate. The caseworker arranged to visit the home again a couple of weeks later and completed collateral contacts with the victim child's sibling's school, daycare and medical provider and no concerns were reported.

The ACOCYF caseworker submitted the Child Protective Services Investigation Report to Childline on 10/27/2017 with the status of "Unfounded" and closed the case on 10/30/2017. There was no law enforcement involvement.

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

Allegheny County was not required to submit a report.

- Strengths in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families; None Identified
- Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families; None Identified
- 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 identified
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies; None Identified
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse. None Identified

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

Allegheny County was not required to submit a report due to the CPS report being determined unfounded within 30 days of the referral.

**Department of Human Services Findings:**

County Strengths:

- There was immediate and excellent interaction and cooperation with the [REDACTED] physician, social worker and medical staff. ACOCYF responded immediately following the near-fatality to ensure the safety of the victim child and his siblings. ACOCYF followed up multiple times when conflicting information was provided by various medical staff.
- The agency immediately met with the mother and the father to discuss the allegations and to secure and assessment of the event.
- The agency met with victim child's siblings.
- Collateral contacts were made to assure that there were no additional concerns.
- The agency completed follow-up home visits to assure safety of the child.

County Weaknesses:

- There were no weakness identified.

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

- There were no regulatory violations.

**Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

Training needs to be provided to physicians and medical providers on what steps should be taken prior to filing a near fatality report to verify the information being reported.

Hospitals should devise a team that will meet to discuss possible near fatality cases, when the child's condition of serious or critical is not totally clear prior to certifying a report as a near fatality.