



*Edward Coleman*  
*Regional Director*

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

(570) 963-4376  
Fax (570) 963-3453

OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES  
NORTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE  
Scranton State Office Building  
100 Lackawanna Avenue  
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18503

## REPORT ON THE FATALITY

# Alyssa Theobald

**Date of BIRTH: 03/25/2000**  
**Date of FATALITY: 01/01/2009**

**REPORT DATE: 02/16/10**

**FAMILY NOT KNOWN TO:**

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

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 No. 1147, now known as Act 33 was signed into law by Governor Rendell on July 3, 2008 and went into effect 180 days from that date, December 28, 2008. This Act amends the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) and sets standards for reviewing and reporting child fatality and near child fatality as a result of suspected child abuse. DPW must conduct child fatality and near fatality review and provide a written report on any child fatality or near fatality where child abuse is suspected.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
Alyssa Theobald	Victim Child	03/25/2000
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED]/1976
[REDACTED]	Paternal grandmother	[REDACTED]/1953
[REDACTED]	Mother	

\* Mother resides in New Jersey

**Notification of Fatality**

On 01/01/09, Susquehanna County Children and Youth Services received a [REDACTED] Report alleging that Alyssa Theobald, age 9, was treated for a severe [REDACTED] at the home of her paternal grandmother. Emergency Medical Technicians responded to the home of paternal grandmother of Child/Victim following a call made to the Emergency Services. The paternal grandmother indicated that the Child/Victim had extreme difficulty breathing. At the time of the Emergency Medical Technician's contact with the Child/Victim she was found to be in [REDACTED]. The child was treated by Emergency Medical Treatment personnel at paternal grandmother's home and subsequently transported to a hospital in New York State where she was pronounced dead. Both paternal grandmother and biological father of Child/Victim were named as [REDACTED] as a result of the incident.

**Documents Reviewed and Individuals Interviewed:**

Northeast Regional Office of Children and Youth (NERO) staff interviewed assigned Susquehanna County [REDACTED] caseworker [REDACTED], [REDACTED] supervisor [REDACTED] and agency administrator, [REDACTED] on 02/05/2009. Additionally, a site record review of [REDACTED] case file was completed. All relevant case notes and reports were reviewed.

**Case Chronology:**

Susquehanna County Children and Youth Services received [REDACTED] on 01/01/2009 alleging that Alyssa Theobald died as the result of paternal grandmother and father's failure to secure adequate medical treatment for child. The [REDACTED] allegations included that Alyssa was suffering from extreme [REDACTED] and custodians failed to secure timely medical care. Susquehanna County Children and Youth commenced a [REDACTED] on 01/01/2009 in conjunction with the law enforcement agency, Pennsylvania State Police/ Gibson Barracks. The following is an outline of activities that occurred:

01/01/2009 (05:00 a.m.)

Collateral contact between Susquehanna County [REDACTED] and Susquehanna County Children and Youth [REDACTED] Case was reviewed. In person contact was authorized.

01/01/2009

Collateral contact between Susquehanna County [REDACTED] caseworker and [REDACTED]. Medical concerns were reviewed. Case specific allegations were discussed.

01/01/2009

Collateral contact with Trooper [REDACTED] of the Pennsylvania State Police. Conjoint interview with family members was discussed. Case specifics were reviewed.

01/01/2009 (07:05 a. m.)

Conjoint Children and Youth and law enforcement interviews with [REDACTED], father of the victim/child and [REDACTED], paternal grandmother of the victim/child. In person interviews were conducted at the family residence. Family background information was secured. Information concerning time frames and actions of all parties were discussed.

01/02/2009

Case staffing at Susquehanna County Children and Youth with Children and Youth director, assigned [REDACTED] caseworker and [REDACTED] supervisor. Information was shared regarding the status of the [REDACTED] and follow up.

01/02/10

Collateral contact with the social worker at Wilson Hospital. Susquehanna County Children and Youth requested additional information regarding medical data and [REDACTED]

01/02/09

Collateral contact with Pennsylvania State Police/ Gibson Barracks. The autopsy results were reviewed.

01/05/09

Collateral contact with [REDACTED], biological mother of victim/child in New Jersey. Background information was secured. Case specifics regarding the time frame of visitation, medical issues and relationship between extended family was reviewed.

01/12/09

Autopsy results and data from death certificate were reviewed.

01/12/09

Collateral contact with the investigating officer at the Pennsylvania State Police. Status of the criminal investigation was reviewed.

01/16/09

Attempted a home visit to paternal grandmother's home. No one available.

01/22/09

Collateral contact with biological father of Child/Victim.

02/12/09

Supervisory review of case data. Pennsylvania State Police Death. Investigation report secured and reviewed. No criminal charges filed. Incident ruled accidental by law enforcement agency. [REDACTED] by Susquehanna County Children and Youth Services. Through the information gathered during the interviews and case record review, it was determined that the child's grandmother was concerned with the child breathing and had phone contact with the child primary caretaker, the mother. The mother told grandmother the child was playing with her and there was no need to be concerned. The grandmother was not trained in symptoms of [REDACTED] difficulties and responded to her best ability. All indications of the investigation is that the grandmother and father responded to meet the child's medical distress and the child died due to her medical condition.

02/13/09

Case [REDACTED] letters prepared and sent to [REDACTED]

**Previous Children and Youth Involvement:**

Susquehanna County Children and Youth Services had no prior activity with this family. Susquehanna County determined that the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services had no record of activity with this family at the time of referral.

**Current Case Status:**

Susquehanna County Children and Youth Services completed the [REDACTED] on 02/13/2009 and [REDACTED]. There was a determination made conjointly by the law enforcement agency and the county child welfare agency that the incident was accidental in nature and there was no intent established on the part of either paternal grandmother or biological father of Child/Victim. Both paternal grandmother and biological father of Child/Victim made diligent efforts to secure emergency medical care for Child/Victim at the onset of the incident.

The Pennsylvania State Police completed the criminal investigation and determined that the incident was accidental. No criminal charges were filed and the law enforcement investigation was closed.

**Services to Children and Family:**

There are no other children within this family residing in Pennsylvania. Susquehanna County Children and Youth Services had contact with New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services and requested that [REDACTED] be offered to the biological mother of the Child/Victim.

The biological father and paternal grandmother of Child/Victim were referred to a [REDACTED] for [REDACTED]

**County Recommendations at the Local Level as Identified by Way of County's Fatality Report:**

The County team reviewed the case on 02/05/09. The factual elements associated with the precipitating factors leading up to the incident and the medical findings were reviewed. The decision of the law enforcement agency to close the case and determine the case to be accidental was also reviewed. The Multi Disciplinary Team concurred with the county agency's determination to assign an [REDACTED] to the investigation. There were no further recommendations set forth at the Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting.

**Northeast Regional Office Findings and Recommendation:**

The Department of Public Welfare, Northeast Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families reviewed the [REDACTED] case file and interviewed all personnel at Susquehanna County Children and Youth involved in the investigation of the [REDACTED] case. The findings of the Multi Disciplinary Team meeting were also reviewed. The Northeast Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families determined that the county agency followed all established regulatory procedures and established protocols for [REDACTED] of this case. A recommendation was made to attempt collateral follow up with the biological mother of the Child/Victim with the assistance of the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services.

**Statutory and Regulatory Compliance by the County Agency:**

The Susquehanna County Children and Youth Services agency met all of the Department of Public Welfare regulations and all statutory provisions relating to the [REDACTED]. The county agency was in full compliance. The [REDACTED] case was [REDACTED] and the criminal investigation was completed and ruled accidental. No criminal charges were filed.

Susquehanna County Children and Youth completed an internal review of this case 02/18/2009. As part of the agency's multi disciplinary review there was a recommendation for additional follow-up with New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services to provide information regarding the results [REDACTED]. This recommendation was supported by the Department of Public Welfare, and Northeast Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families.