



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

## REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:



**Date of Birth: 4/28/11**  
**Date of Incident: 3/02/14**  
**Date of Oral Report: 3/7/14**

### FAMILY KNOWN TO:

Philadelphia Department of Human Services

### REPORT FINALIZED ON:

12/18/14

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. 6349 (b))

**Reason for Review:**

Senate Bill 1147, Printer's Number 2159 was signed into law on July 3, 2008. The bill became effective on December 30, 2008 and is known as Act 33 of 2008. As part of Act 33 of 2008, DHS must conduct a review and provide a written report of all cases of suspected child abuse that result in a child 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.

Act 33 of 2008 also requires that county children and youth agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a child fatality or near fatality is indicated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the oral report to ChildLine. The County convened a review team in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report on 3/21/2014.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child (VC)	[REDACTED]/11
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED]/88
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED]06
[REDACTED]	Grandfather	Adult
[REDACTED]	Aunt	[REDACTED]/87

**Notification of Child Near Fatality:**

The victim child was brought to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) on 3/2/2014. When the child first became sick, the mother should have increased the [REDACTED]. The child has a medical condition, [REDACTED], which requires careful monitoring of her health. The child became sick to her stomach and vomited during the morning hours before the mother left the home for work. When the mother went to work, the child was in the care of an aunt. The child continued to vomit. When the mother returned from work, the child was on the floor. The child was in shock and should have been given the [REDACTED]. The mother reported that the child's medication was expired and she never got it refilled. The mother brought the child to the hospital on 3/02/2014. Her blood pressure was noted to be elevated. Her blood sugar was 28 and her kidneys were shutting down. The child was having difficulty breathing. The child was stabilized, but nearly died. Child was last seen at St. Christopher's Hospital in January 2013. The child should have been seen quarterly at St. Christopher's, but the hospital reported that the mother failed to follow up. The child was also to be seen [REDACTED] at St. Christopher's Hospital but the mother did not keep the appointments. Interviews with the aunt determined that aunt was the child's care taker at the time of the incident and the aunt was aware that the child took medications, but was not knowledgeable about the child's condition.

### **Summary of DHS Child Near Fatality Review Activities:**

The Southeast Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) reviewed the medical records, county investigation records, file records, Act 33 records, safety plan, and interviewed the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (Philadelphia DHS) caseworker, [REDACTED]

### **Children and Youth Involvement Prior to Incident:**

Mother was involved with Philadelphia DHS as a child.

On 3/23/2011, Philadelphia DHS received a General Protective Services (GPS) report – The report stated that the mother was using unusual discipline but not physical, however the report did not mention what kind of discipline was used. The mother requested assistance with the care of 4 year old [REDACTED] were offered through [REDACTED]. The case closed in June 2011.

On 7/3/2013, Philadelphia DHS received a report alleging that the mother was not showing affection towards the children. The mother was providing for the children's basic needs, which included feeding them and ensuring that they were kept clean. The home was appropriate and the reporter denied that the mother was physically abusing the children. The mother did not have any reported concerns regarding mental health issues, domestic violence, or a drug history. The report was screened out as there were no identified dependency issues.

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

The VC was born at Temple University Hospital and transported to St. Christopher's [REDACTED] which results in [REDACTED]. The child takes [REDACTED] as her daily [REDACTED] replacement, and needs extra for significant illnesses and stresses. The child also requires [REDACTED] (regulate salt and water levels). This medication is very important to sustain the child's life. Her body cannot produce the amount of steroids she needs. The mother was aware of the child's medical condition and had been instructed by the physician at St Christopher Hospital about the child's care. The mother was instructed that if the child becomes ill she has to have more of the medication. St. Christopher stated that the mother is supposed to bring the child for medical appointment every three to four months. The child had not been seen since January 2013 (14 months). The mother informed them that she did not refill the medication and the medication that she had was expired. Mother could not report when the last time she had given the child her medication. If the child had gotten the medication, her condition would not have gotten as serious. The maternal grandfather and the aunt who reside in the home were not aware of the child's serious condition. The physician also spoke about the "shamefulness" that many parents feel due to this illness and could be the reason mother did not share this with the family.

**Current Case Status:**

The child [REDACTED] from the hospital on 3/10/14. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] the child was placed in kinship care with her God parents

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

- Strengths:  
The review team felt that the multi-disciplinary team social worker did an excellent job in investigating the case, including conferencing with the chain of command.
- Deficiencies:  
None identified
- Recommendations for Change at the Local Level:  
A meeting with the hospitals and the medical providers should occur to determine how children with concerning medical issues should be followed and reported to ChildLine when children are not seen for follow-up appointments.
- Recommendations for Change at the State Level:  
None identified

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

The Southeast Regional OCYF obtained the family's Philadelphia DHS records and the VC's hospital records. A review of records and discussion of the family dynamics was executed. The Southeast Region participated in the Philadelphia County Internal Act 33 near fatality review team. The Southeast Region is in receipt of the County's Act 33 review report and has reviewed it. The Department is in agreement with the findings.

**Department of Human Services Findings:**

- County Strengths:  
The MDT Team did a great job of investigating the case. The county provided follow-up with the public and private stake holders from the onset of the Child Protective Services (CPS) report and investigation.
- County Weaknesses:  
None identified
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance:  
None identified

**Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

The hospitals and health care providers need to collaborate with the county children and youth agencies when medically fragile children are not receiving follow up medical care.

Family members need support from the medical community when their children are being treated for medical conditions that may cause the parents to feel some shame or embarrassment when discussing the condition.