



REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[REDACTED]

Date of Birth: 09/12/2016
Date of Incident: 07/14/2017
Date of Report to ChildLine: 07/15/2017
CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]

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

Lebanon County Children and Youth Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON:
01/03/2018

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 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.

Lebanon 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 08/08/2017.

Family Constellation:

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim child	09/12/2016
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1996
* [REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED] 1971
[REDACTED]	Maternal Grandmother	[REDACTED] 1968
[REDACTED]	Maternal grandfather	[REDACTED] 1967
[REDACTED]	Uncle	[REDACTED] 2002

* 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 Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (CERO) obtained and reviewed all current case records pertaining to the family. CERO staff conducted interviews with the intake supervisor and caseworker at Lebanon County Children and Youth. These interviews occurred on 08/08/2017 and 08/22/2017. The initial report and law enforcement involvement was reviewed. CERO staff participated in the Act 33 meeting that occurred on 08/08/2017 in which medical professionals, agency staff, law enforcement and legal counsel were present and provided information regarding the incident.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

In December 2016, Lebanon County Children and Youth Services received a suspected child abuse regarding the victim child’s parents being involved in a domestic violence situation. During an altercation, the mother was holding the victim child who hit her head on the wall. The victim child suffered a bruise to her head. The child was not found to have any other injuries. The mother filed a protection from abuse and returned home with the child. Both parents were later

indicated for creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury. The case was accepted for protective services on 02/23/2017 due to the abuse incident and the mother's instability. The parent's relationship has continued to be tumultuous and the mother moved around frequently. The mother has a history of [REDACTED], was in foster care as a child then later adopted [REDACTED]. The father has denied paternity at times and his relationship with the mother has been on and off throughout the life of the case. However, he has always attempted to financially provide for the victim child and her mother.

On 03/14/2017, the victim child was seen at the Emergency Room for a bruise to her head. The child was visiting with another man, who potentially fathered the child. He brought the child to the Emergency Room saying that the mother hurt her. Two separate CPS cases were reported, one for the mother hitting the child and the other for her not properly supervising the child and her rolling off the couch. As a result, the agency was concerned about the child being safe with the mother and put a safety plan in place. The victim child's mother placed the child in the care of the mother's adoptive parents. A few days later, the mother became incarcerated for a period of time. The informal arrangement continued until this latest report. Both CPS reports in March were listed to be unfounded as the child did not suffer any significant injuries.

Circumstances of Child Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:

On 07/15/2017, the victim child's ongoing caseworker received a phone call from the maternal grandmother informing her that the victim child was being taken to the WellSpan Good Samaritan Hospital for difficulty breathing. The CYS caseworker met the family at the hospital and learned that the victim child's [REDACTED]. The victim child was going to be transferred to the Hershey Medical Center [REDACTED]. However, significant physical injuries were noted and the victim child was taken to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) instead where she arrived in critical condition. Once at CHOP, it was determined that the child's injuries were the result of physical abuse warranting a child protective services (CPS) report to be made. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The maternal grandmother noted that the victim child had been lethargic for several days prior to being taken to the hospital.

During the initial interview [REDACTED] the alleged perpetrator, the maternal uncle, admitted to shaking and squeezing the victim child to make her stop crying. The uncle admitted to being in a caretaking role eight hours per day, five days per week for approximately one month. Subsequently, he was taken into custody and placed at [REDACTED] Detention Center. The paternal grandfather was able to corroborate the uncle's claim of babysitting the victim child eight hours per day, five days a week. It is important to note that the uncle later changed his initial report indicating his time babysitting the victim child to be "once in a while" and that the maternal grandmother would call every half hour to monitor

the situation. During an interview with the maternal grandmother, she indicated that there were times she would take the infant to work with her. It was also reported that the grandmother's female cousin was in the home the day the abuse occurred but was upstairs in bed with a migraine and unaware of what had happened. The maternal grandmother mentioned that the uncle doesn't have "mental issues" but rather "behavioral issues", noting specifically an anger problem. The grandmother also feels that she didn't do anything wrong and would like to have custody of the victim child since the uncle will not be returning home. It should be noted that the maternal grandmother never expressed a need for childcare to Lebanon County CYS.

Lebanon County CYS obtained a release to speak with the uncle. As noted above, he recanted his initial accounting of his babysitting responsibilities. Information obtained through [REDACTED] records indicated a history of assault, family issues and [REDACTED]. The uncle noted that he wanted to babysit to help out and he didn't become frustrated because he thought he was able to handle the victim child. He reported that he didn't feel pressured to care for the victim child and was offered \$20 per week in exchange for babysitting. The uncle now stated that he babysat from about 6am until noon, Monday through Friday but that the maternal grandmother would call every half hour to check how the victim child was doing and if he needed anything. [REDACTED]

The victim child was released from the hospital on 07/20/2017, has been thriving in foster care and appears to have no issues related to her injuries. She is expected to make a full recovery.

The maternal grandmother was arrested on 08/07/2017, for endangering the welfare of a child due to having knowledge of the uncle's behavioral issues and allowing the uncle to care for the victim child. Lebanon County CYS indicated both the maternal uncle and maternal grandmother on 08/24/2017. Both were charged with aggravated and simple assault and endangering the welfare of a child. The maternal grandmother was arrested and released awaiting trial. The uncle is currently [REDACTED]. The case remains in [REDACTED]. Services being provided are parenting classes for both parents and [REDACTED] for the victim child. The biological mother is currently in jail. The father has unsupervised visits at the Lebanon County CYS office every week for one hour. Visits will be increased to two hours weekly and unsupervised starting 12/12/2017.

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;
The county agency investigation complied with regulations and response times as required.

- Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families;
The agency report did not reference any deficiencies.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse;
The county agency report did not mention any recommendations for change at the state or county level.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies
The county agency report did not mention any recommendations for change at the state or county level.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse.
The county agency report did not mention any recommendations for change at the state or county level.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The county report was received on 10/02/2017. There were no issues or concerns regarding the report.

Department of Human Services Findings:

- County Strengths:
The county agency investigation complied with regulations and response times as required.
- County Weaknesses:
The circumstances of this case and the review of the county's work did not identify any systemic weaknesses. This family was known to the county.
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency.
There were no areas of non-compliance found during the review of this case

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

The Department concurs with the findings and recommendations of Lebanon County Children and Youth's Act 33 meeting.