



REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[REDACTED]

Date of Birth: 06/10/2015

Date of Incident: 10/14/2017

Date of Report to ChildLine: 10/14/2017

CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]

**FAMILY NOT KNOWN TO COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENCY AT TIME
OF INCIDENT OR WITHIN THE PRECEDING 16 MONTHS:**

Luzerne County Children and Youth

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

04/05/2018

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 the 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.

Luzerne County did not convene a review team. The investigation was unfounded within 30 days; therefore, the county was not required to convene a review team.

Family Constellation:

First and Last Name:

██████████
██████████
* ██████████

Relationship:

Victim Child
Biological Mother
Biological Father
Paternal Grandfather

Date of Birth:

06/10/2015
██████████ 1987
██████████ 1984
██████████ 1961

*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 Northeast Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families (NERO) reviewed the family case record. The county agency was not required to convene an Act 33 review team meeting due to the investigation being unfounded within 30 days.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

There was no prior history with Luzerne County Children and Youth Services (LCCYS).

Circumstances of Child Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:

On 10/14/2017, LCCYS received a Child Protective Services (CPS) referral ██████████
██████████ The referral source was reporting an incident that had occurred at the home of the victim child’s paternal grandfather. The victim child’s father reported that he took his son to visit with paternal grandfather and took the child in the house with him. Father stated that he left the child unattended for a short amount of time because he could not find the grandfather. Father came downstairs and his son was on the floor playing. Father stated that he took his son to the convenience store when he noticed that he was acting strange so he went back to the

grandfather's home and called 911. It was then that father realized that his son took his grandfather's [REDACTED] medication. The child was unresponsive in the ambulance. He was taken to [REDACTED] Medical Center where [REDACTED] physician at [REDACTED] certified the child to be in serious condition based on suspected child abuse or neglect. The child was transferred to Geisinger Danville for continued care.

On 10/14/2017, father reported to law enforcement that he took his son to visit his paternal grandfather. He put the child down and went upstairs to see where the grandfather was. He came back downstairs, grabbed the child and walked to a convenience store to get candy. Father stated that the child started acting funny and was wobbly so he took the child back to the paternal grandfather's home. Father noticed the pill bottle on the floor and it was empty. The grandfather reported that there were [REDACTED] pills in the bottle. Father called for an ambulance. The child was unresponsive and transported by ambulance to the emergency room. Law enforcement requested a drug toxicology for the child.

The LCCYS on-call caseworker spoke [REDACTED] at Geisinger Danville who reported that the child's toxicology results were all negative, including negative for all illicit drugs [REDACTED] upon child's arrival at [REDACTED], the child was considered critical [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The child was considered stable and there was no evidence to support that the child had ingested any of the paternal grandfather's [REDACTED] medication. The child was responding accordingly, eating, oriented, alert, and if he continued to show signs of improving, he would be discharged later the same day.

The LCCYS on-call caseworker contacted Montour County Children and Youth to request a courtesy contact with the child. The initial contact with the child was completed at Geisinger Danville by a Montour County Children and Youth caseworker.

The child [REDACTED] the hospital on 10/15/2017. The following day, the LCCYS caseworker conducted an unannounced home visit to the family home. The home was appropriate, there were no safety hazards and the child was observed playing blocks with his father in the living room. The caseworker conducted separate interviews with both parents. The mother was at work at the time of the incident. When she got the call, she went directly to the hospital.

The father stated that he went to visit his father at his home. His son said he wanted fruit snacks and he turned to get them and the child threw a pill bottle at him. Father stated that his son was fine in the house and they went to the store to get candy. The child was acting funny and the paternal grandfather said there were [REDACTED] pills in the bottle. When father looked at the pill bottle, it was empty. Father called for an ambulance and they went to [REDACTED] emergency room. Father reported that his son was moaning and talking a little. In

the ambulance, the child was going in and out, crying and whining and [REDACTED]

Both parents cooperated with the LCCYS assessment including home visits, signing consents for information and urine screening. Neither parent was positive for anything other than their prescribed medication.

[REDACTED]

On 11/02/2017, the LCCYS caseworker conducted an announced follow-up home visit to the family home. The child was observed to be awake, running around, playing, and interacting positively with the mother.

On 11/02/2017, the case was determined unfounded and the case was closed. Law enforcement reported that charges would not be pursued based on the negative toxicology report.

Summary of 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 case was unfounded in less than 30 days; therefore, neither an Act 33 team meeting nor written report was required.

Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families:

The case was unfounded in less than 30 days; therefore, neither an Act 33 team meeting nor written report was required.

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 case was unfounded in less than 30 days; therefore, neither an Act 33 team meeting nor written report was required.

Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies:

The case was unfounded in less than 30 days; therefore, neither an Act 33 team meeting nor written report was required.

Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse:

The case was unfounded in less than 30 days; therefore, neither an Act 33 team meeting nor written report was required.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The case was unfounded in less than 30 days; therefore, neither an Act 33 team meeting nor written report was required.

Department of Human Services Findings:

County Strengths:

LCCYS promptly requested a courtesy contact from Montour County Children and Youth with the victim child due to the victim child being admitted to a pediatric specialty hospital in Montour County.

LCCYS assured the safety of the victim child via courtesy interview request to Montour County Children and Youth. LCCYS followed up with seeing the victim child the day following his discharge from the hospital.

County Weaknesses:

There was no documented interview with the paternal grandfather despite the incident allegedly occurring at the paternal grandfather's home. Although the father reported that the paternal grandfather was not present in his own home at the time of the incident, it was reported that paternal grandfather returned to his home and verbally confirmed to the father that [REDACTED] was missing from the pill bottle. It is reasonable to expect that the paternal grandfather would have information relating to the incident.

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

3490.55 (d): The paternal grandfather was not interviewed despite the incident allegedly occurring in his home and his grandchild allegedly ingesting the paternal grandfather's [REDACTED] medication. There is no documentation in the record indicating that attempts to interview him were made prior to making a status determination.

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

County child welfare agencies must ensure that interviews are conducted with those persons who are known to have or may reasonably be expected to have information related to the incident of suspected child abuse and/or general protective service report; including, but not limited to, those listed in 3490.55(d)(1-7) and 3490.232 (g).

Public Service Announcements related to medication safety should promote awareness of medication storage not only for families with small children but for all households as children can visit at any time and potentially have access to medications if not stored out of reach.