



REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[REDACTED]

Date of Birth: 11/02/2017
Date of Incident: 12/02/2017
Date of Report to ChildLine: 12/02/2017
CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]

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

Mifflin County Children and Youth Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON:
05/17/2018

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, 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.

Mifflin County Children and Youth Services (MCCYS) has convened a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The review team meeting was convened on 12/19/2017.

Family Constellation:

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
██████████	Victim Child	11/02/2017
██████████	Mother	██████████ 1993
██████████	Father	██████████ 1985

Summary of OCYF Child Fatality Review Activities:

The Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (CERO) obtained and reviewed all case records pertaining to the family. CERO staff spoke with Mifflin County Children and Youth Services (MCCYS) staff involved with this case and attended the Act 33 meeting held on 12/19/2017.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

This family was not previously known to MCCYS.

Circumstances of Child Fatality and Related Case Activity:

A child protective services report was received on 12/02/2017, by MCCYS with concerns that the victim child was brought into the hospital by her parents with bruising to her face. The parents decided to have the victim child examined after the father returned home from working an overnight shift and noticed the bruising on the victim child’s face. Tests and exams completed at the local hospital showed that the victim child had a significant skull fracture with a four millimeter displacement, a hematoma, and swelling and bruising on the right side of her forehead and cheek. Additional bruising was also noted on the victim child’s cheeks, forearms, and legs. Due to the victim child’s injuries being indicative of abuse, she was sent for a full skeletal scan two weeks after the incident. This scanned revealed that she also had a healing bucket handle fracture to her right tibia which also suggested that the victim child has been abused.

The victim child was transported to a specialized hospital for treatment and observation where she remained until she was released to her father's care on 12/04/2017. The father filed for and was granted emergency custody of the victim child on 12/05/2017, and his petition was granted. At the formal custody hearing on 12/20/2017, the father was granted full custody of the victim child and it was ordered that her mother have no contact with the child. There are no other children in the family.

MCCYS determined that the mother was the sole individual caring for the victim child at the time that the injuries would have occurred. The mother was very inconsistent throughout the investigation in her accounts of how the victim child received the injuries, but denied that she had harmed her child. The mother initially told hospital staff that she had fallen down the steps with the victim child when she blacked out due to anemia while caring for the child, and she had come to at the bottom of the stairs with the victim child laying in her lap. The mother stated that she was leaning against a post at the bottom of the steps and felt that the victim child may have hit her head on the post, but stated that the victim child appeared fine and was not crying. Hospital staff confirmed that the victim child's injuries were not consistent with this type of accident. Information was also later received that when the father had returned home from work on the morning that the victim child was taken to the hospital, the mother had told him that she thought someone had broken into the house and her wallet was missing. The father noted that the glass on the front door was broken when he got home, however, the broken glass was lying on the family's porch as if it had been broken from inside the home. The mother's reportedly stolen wallet was found by the father in the family's washer. MCCYS was informed that there have been concerns that the mother was suffering from [REDACTED]. Mother was not taking care of herself or eating well. Mother was also noted to have a history of manipulative behavior as she would previously threatened to harm herself in order to get the father to comply with her wishes. Evidence was also presented during the investigation that prior to the victim child being injured, the mother had been making statements that the child hated her, that she was going to be arrested, that the child was an absolute nightmare, and that the child had ruined her life. It was also noted that while at the hospital with the victim child, the mother had registered very little emotion or response to the child's condition. Mother also did not attempt to offer the victim child any comfort.

Due to concerns for the mother's lack of emotional response, the concerning statements she had made regarding the victim child as well as statements that were concerning for self-harm, and concerns that the mother had access to hunting rifles, mother was held [REDACTED] for evaluation. [REDACTED], the mother [REDACTED]. When she later spoke with agency staff, the mother stated that she now cannot recall anything that happened the night of the alleged incident.

MCCYS indicated this case for physical abuse on 01/31/2018, naming the mother as the perpetrator of the abuse. At this time, the mother has been charged with aggravated assault, neglect of care, endangering the welfare of a child, and simple

assault. Mother is currently incarcerated and awaiting a criminal trial. MCCYS referred the father and the victim child to a local parenting program. The father is receiving support with caring for the victim child from his family and there are no concerns for the victim child's safety or well-being at this time as she has made a full recovery from her injuries. MCCYS closed out the family's case at the intake level and no further services are being provided to the family.

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

- Strengths in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families:
 - Dad's supportive family
 - [REDACTED] is the dad and paternal grandmother's priority
 - Dad is employed, has stable housing, and is cooperative
 - Dad took emergency custody of [REDACTED]
- Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families: The following challenges were noted by the county, not all of which are deficiencies:
 - None
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse:
 - More help should be offered to post-partum mothers [REDACTED] and more follow up should occur.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies; and
 - None
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse.
 - None

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The County submitted their report in a timely manner within the required 90 day timeframe. The county report was reviewed and the Department is in agreement with their findings.

Department of Human Services Findings:

- County Strengths:
 - The agency immediately began the investigation, cooperated with medical personal, and assured the safety of the children involved.
 - The agency conducted very detailed and thorough interviews with the subjects of the report, as well as collateral contacts. Decisions made on the case were well-informed.

- County Weaknesses:
 - None
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency.
 - None

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

The Department concurs with the County review team's recommendation regarding the need for more help and better follow-up offered to post-partum mothers.