



## REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[REDACTED]

Date of Birth: 05/04/2017  
Date of Incident: 06/05/2017  
Date of Report to ChildLine: 06/05/2017  
CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]

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

Blair County Children, Youth and Families

**REPORT FINALIZED ON:**

December 4, 2017

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.

Somerset County convened a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The county review team was convened on 06/23/2017.

**Family Constellation:**

First and Last Name:

[REDACTED]

Relationship:

Mother  
Father  
Victim Child

Date of Birth:

[REDACTED] 1997  
[REDACTED] 1995  
05/04/2017

**Summary of OCYF Child Fatality Review Activities:**

The Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families, CROCYF, obtained and reviewed the Blair County Children, Youth and Families, (BCCYF), child protective service investigation file. The file was inclusive of medical reports, agency safety and risk assessment records and dictation.

**Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:**

BCCYF had no prior involvement with this family.

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

BCCYF received this Child Protective Services report from ChildLine on 06/05/2017. The report indicated that the child was taken to [REDACTED] Hospital by the mother and father. The mother reported that she had been out of the home from approximately 7:00 am to 11:00 am leaving the child in the father's care. The mother stated when she arrived home at 11:00 am "there is just something not right." The mother states they then brought the child to [REDACTED] Hospital. While at [REDACTED] Hospital, the father eventually left because he was upset that the hospital was transferring the

child to [REDACTED] and he would have problems traveling [REDACTED]. The only information the hospital obtained from the parents was the father stating that he was sleeping and the child was not in bed with him "but beside him sleeping". The child was listed in critical condition, per [REDACTED]. Child was examined to have pupils not reacting, vitals were slow, breathing labored, raised pulse, limp body and the CT scan revealed a brain bleed. [REDACTED] reported that the child's injuries are "suspicious". None of the staff wanted to ask the mother any details on the incident and it took several minutes to finally have the nurse supervisor agree to have the certifying physician come to the phone to answer medical questions. The staff was uncooperative and stated that they are a "small hospital". [REDACTED] Hospital also refused to call [REDACTED] Hospital to obtain the child's medical records. [REDACTED] certified the child to be in critical condition, unknown if the child is suspected to survive. At the end of the call, [REDACTED] helicopter service was approaching to transfer the child [REDACTED].

On 06/05/2017, BCCYF requested and received a courtesy safety contact for the child from Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families at [REDACTED]. There are no other children in the home.

On 06/06/2017, BCCYF and two [REDACTED] Police Department officers went to [REDACTED] to see the child, interview the mother and the father, and speak with the doctors.

[REDACTED] stated that the family provided her the following information: "The mother was woken up by the family dogs around 6:00 am. She checked on the child but did not pick the child up. The mother left the residence around 7:00 am. She returned to the residence around 1:00 pm. She checked on the child when she got home and noticed the child was limp and did not look right to her. The mother was with her mother during the hours she was not at the residence. The father reported [REDACTED] that he was sleeping and also was woken by the family dogs; this was around 11:00 am. He says that he checked on the child when he got up. He says the child did not look right to him and she was breathing oddly. The father acted out the breathing for the doctor. He reported that he texted the mother that there was something wrong with the child and she (mother) needed to come home. The mother stated that she did receive a text from the father about the child, but reported the text was not emergent and she did not go home right away. The doctor stated that the mother and father looked through their phones for at least 15 minutes while the doctor was present and they could not find those texts".

During BCCYF and law enforcement's interview with the mother on 06/06/2017, she confirmed "the information that she had provided to the doctor, however she reported to law enforcement and BCCYF that she laid back down after being awoken by the dogs at 6:00 am, and then she woke back up around 7:30 am or 8:00 am and left the residence shortly thereafter. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The mother confirmed/reported she received a text form the father, around 11:30 am, stating that the victim child was acting weird; she stated that she texted back asking what

he meant by weird, and she reported that his responding text was never-mind, she is okay now”.

During BCCYF and law enforcement’s interview with the father on 06/06/2017, “he reported when he woke up the morning of the incident, he tried to feed the victim child and but she did not want to eat. He reported that he put her back into her sleeper and she was hot, limp, pale, and gasping for air. He stated that he took her out of her sleeper and changed her diaper. He confirmed that he texted the mother that the child was acting weird. He described weird as sleeping a lot. The father reported the mother arrived home around 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. During the interview, the father stated that this was his fault. When asked why, he reported that he was rocking the baby back and forth in his arms.

The mother and father were interviewed again on 06/15/2017, by BCCYF and the [REDACTED] Police Department. At this interview the [REDACTED] Police department issued a search warrant for the mother and father’s cell phones. The mother and father complied with the warrant. During the father’s interview, “the father reported that on the morning of the incident, he had been tripped by the dogs, while holding the child, and that he fell with the child. When it was explained to the father that the child’s injuries could not have been caused by a fall, the father then reported that he could have shaken the child because he was mad at the dogs and not completely awake. Further into the interview, the father reported that he did not fall with the child, and that he shook the child once. He made statements such as “I killed my own baby” and “didn’t mean to.” Additionally the interviews determined that both parents delayed medical care for the child for several hours.

During the investigation, the parent’s cell phones were found to contain numerous texts back and forth related to the victim child’s condition and well-being. The phones also contained an internet search history showing that the parents were searching topics such as high pitch baby cry, baby warm to touch, and baby non-responsive.

The child was discharged [REDACTED] on 07/10/2017. BCCYF was granted custody with right of placement on the same day and she was placed into foster care.

On 07/28/2017, in collaboration with the [REDACTED] Police Department, BCCYF determined this case as “Indicated” naming the mother and the child’s father as the perpetrators. The father was indicated for causing bodily injury to a child through a recent act/failure to act, subcategory shaking; causing bodily injury to a child through a recent act/failure to act, subcategory causing; and causing serious physical neglect of a child, subcategory failure to provide medical treatment/care. The mother was indicated for causing serious physical neglect of a child, subcategory failure to provide medical treatment/care.

The mother and father were charged criminally on 08/08/2017. Both were incarcerated the same day. The mother posted bail on 08/09/2017. The father was charged with the following: F1 – Aggravated Assault, F3 – Endangering the Welfare of a Child, M2 – Simple Assault, M2 – Recklessly Endangering Another Person, and

S – Harassment. The mother was charged with the following: M1 – Endangering the Welfare of a Child and M2 – Recklessly Endangering Another Person.

The father is currently at [REDACTED] Prison. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

The child remains in foster care. The mother and father are not currently visiting the child due to their criminal court provisions. The maternal grandmother is visiting with the child one hour, every other week, at the agency, supervised by one of the foster parents. The paternal grandmother, is visiting with the child one hour, every week, at the agency, supervised by one of the foster parents.

### **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;  
The County Review Team felt that the coordinated response and investigation by Blair County Children, Youth, and Families and the [REDACTED] Police Department was commendable and in compliance with laws, statutes, and regulations.
- Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families;  
There were no deficiencies noted.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse;  
There were no recommendations made.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies; and  
There were no recommendations made.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse.  
There were no recommendations made.

### **Department Review of County Internal Report:**

The Act 33 Child Fatality Review Team Meeting Report was received by CROCYF in November 2017. The CROCYF attended the Act 33 Child Near-Fatality Review Team meeting on 06/23/2017 and was aware of the discussion, recommendations and outcome. CROCYF finds the county's report content and findings are representative of what was discussed during the meeting on 06/23/2017.

**Department of Human Services Findings:**

- County Strengths:  
BCCYF conducted the investigation in cooperation with law enforcement and medical services/providers. The record was comprehensive; including medical reports, interviews, risk and safety assessments, and case dictation.
- County Weaknesses:  
There were no weaknesses noted.
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency:  
There were no areas of non-compliance noted.

**Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

BCCYF should continue to conduct thorough and timely investigations in collaboration with law enforcement, the court and medical and service providers. BCCYF should provide education to the hospitals and service providers in regard to child abuse and reporting procedures/requirements.