



## **REPORT ON THE FATALITY OF:**

Dante Welton

**Date of Birth:** 07/26/2007

**Date of Incident:** 01/09/2019

**Date of Report to ChildLine:** 01/10/2019

**CWIS Referral ID:** [REDACTED]

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

Union County Children and Youth Services  
Northumberland County Children and Youth Services

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

Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency

### **REPORT FINALIZED ON:**

07/11/2019

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.

Lancaster 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 01/23/2019. The review included participation and input from Northumberland County Children and Youth Services, Columbia County Children and Youth Services and Union County Children and Youth Services as a joint review.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
Dante Welton	Victim Child	07/26/2007
██████████	Mother	██████████/1986
██████████	Father	██████████/1983

**Summary of OCYF Child 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 reviewed various reports, assessments, and case documentation provided by Lancaster County, Northumberland County, Union County and Columbia County. CERO staff discussed the case with the counties on 01/10/2019, 01/22/2019, 01/23/2019, 04/30/2019, and 06/06/2019.

**Summary of circumstances prior to Incident:**

On 11/24/2015, Columbia County Children and Youth Services received a ██████████ ██████████ report on the ██████████. There were concerns of unsanitary home conditions and possible bed bugs. The ██████████ ██████████ but there were no bed bugs found in the ██████████ home. The case was closed on 12/03/2015 as the victim child did not return to this home and resided with the ██████████

On 04/26/2018, Union County Children and Youth Services received a ██████████ referral as the victim child had a ██████████. The case was ██████████ by Union County CYS as the victim child stated that he fell off a rock wall while at his ██████████. No further services were needed.

On 09/21/2018, Northumberland County Children and Youth Services (NCCYS) received a [REDACTED] referral regarding the [REDACTED] not providing adequate housing or healthcare to the victim child. This case was closed by the agency on 11/07/2018 when it was determined that the [REDACTED] was providing for the victim child's needs. No additional services were put in place.

On 12/19/2018, NCCYS received a [REDACTED] in which it was alleged that the [REDACTED] had harmed the victim child in the form of [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] was granted a protection from abuse order against the [REDACTED] due to this report. The agency did speak to the victim child, [REDACTED]. There were no current [REDACTED] as the alleged incident occurred two weeks prior. The [REDACTED] claimed to have pictures but would not share them with the agency. As the agency was still investigating this report, they received another [REDACTED] report on 01/04/2019 as the victim child had not been in school since 11/29/2018 and had missed 21.5 days of school. The [REDACTED] was listed as responsible for the truancy. The agency went to the home of the [REDACTED] on this date and was told that the [REDACTED] had taken the victim child and gone to visit family. It was also indicated that the [REDACTED] did not have a cell phone where [REDACTED] could be reached.

The agency was in the process of assessing both of these reports when the fatality incident occurred. The [REDACTED] report which was received on 12/19/2018 against the [REDACTED] by NCCYS on 01/17/2019.

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

On 01/10/2019, Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency (LCCYA) received a report for the death of a child and the child's [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] and victim child had checked into a hotel in Lancaster on 01/08/2019. When the owners of the hotel went to clean the room on 01/09/2019, they found the bodies of the [REDACTED] and the victim child in the room. An investigation by law enforcement found that the [REDACTED] had shot the victim child in the head and then shot [REDACTED] in the head. The [REDACTED] had purchased the gun legally on 01/03/2019 and had visited family in Lancaster on 01/07/2019 with the child. The family was from Northumberland County.

Through the investigation it was found that the [REDACTED] had been granted temporary custody of the child on 01/04/2019, but when the [REDACTED] went to get the child from the [REDACTED], they were not at home. The [REDACTED] had requested that the court issue an Amber Alert but was told there was not enough evidence to do so at the time. An Amber Alert was set to be issued on 01/09/2019, but then the bodies were found in Lancaster.

[REDACTED] declined and interview with LCCYA but told police that the [REDACTED] and that there were ongoing custody disputes.

Lancaster County CYA filed their investigation report with ChildLine on 02/21/2019 with a status of [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] was listed as the alleged perpetrator. No charges were filed as the [REDACTED] is deceased.

The agency case is closed as there are no other children in 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;
  - A collaborative investigation has occurred for this case between law enforcement and other County Children and Youth Agencies.
- Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families;
  - This case had an extremely unfortunate outcome. Lancaster County Children and Youth was not notified of family being in Lancaster County and thus was unable to assess for concerns for safety or risk, and possible prevent the fatal event.
- 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 firearm, though purchased legally, was purchased days before the ██████ was awarded full custody of the child. Perhaps further measures could be taken for those selling firearms to see if any significant court decisions were made recently.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies;
  - The ██████ and child were residing in Northumberland County prior to the murder suicide. CPSL, Act 33 regulation requires that the case review occur in the County where the death occurred. A more exhaustive meeting may have occurred if the Act 33 regulation would allow for the meeting to occur in the county of origin.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse.
  - None noted.

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

The Central Region Office received the Lancaster County Child Fatality Team Report on 04/22/2019. DHS finds the county's internal report as an accurate reflection of the Act 33 meeting. The report content and findings are representative of what was discussed during the meeting on 01/23/2019. As case activity continued beyond the Act 33 meeting, there are findings that are not incorporated into the county report and will be addressed by DHS findings. Written feedback was provided to Lancaster County Administration on 04/23/2019.

**Department of Human Services Findings:**

- County Strengths:

- The agency immediately reached out to all other counties with history to gather information and include them in the agency review.
- All counties involved were active in assessing the needs of the family with each referral.
- NCCYS was active in trying to address the truancy concerns and the concerns of the [REDACTED] when the child could not be found.
- County Weaknesses:
  - None noted.
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency.
  - No areas of non-compliance were noted.

**Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

The recommendation made by the county regarding a search of recent court decisions when purchasing guns is a valid suggestion and could alert agencies to potential violent situations or the likelihood of these events.

It should also be noted that while the Act 33 review did need to occur in the county where the incident occurred, the counties that contributed to Lancaster County's meeting, also could have held their own Act 33 meetings instead of jointly meeting with Lancaster County. If counties conduct joint Act 33 meetings, the meeting content, detail and discussion should be as if each county was having an individual meeting including representation from each individual county's Act 33 team with full case discussion and disclosure. It is possible that there could have been further recommendations to come out of those meetings due to the agencies' history with the family.