



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:



Date of Birth: 06/04/2013

Date of Incident: 06/12/2013

Date of Oral Report: 06/13/2013

FAMILY KNOWN TO:

Cambria County Children and Youth Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

01/07/2014

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. 6349 (b))

Reason for Review:

Senate Bill 1147, Printer's Number 2159 was signed into law on July 3, 2008. The bill became effective on December 30, 2008 and is known as Act 33 of 2008. As part of Act 33 of 2008, DPW must conduct a review and provide a written report of all cases of suspected child abuse that result in a child 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.

Act 33 of 2008 also requires that county children and youth agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a child fatality or near fatality is indicated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the oral report to ChildLine. Cambria County convened a review team on July 11, 2013 in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report.

Family Constellation:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
██████████	Mother	██████████ 1988
██████████	Father	██████████ 1980
██████████	Son (victim child)	06/04/2013
██████████	Mother's paramour	██████████ 1979

* Non-household member

Notification of Child (Near) Fatality:

Cambria County Children and Youth Services (CYS) received a report on the victim child's condition on 06/13/2013. The agency received notification of the near death of ██████████, nine (9) day old infant, when ██████████ with the ██████████ located in Johnstown, PA informed Childline that the victim child was in serious and critical condition when the child was seen at ██████████ on 06/12/2013. ██████████ reported he ██████████ the child with ██████████.

The Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth and Families (DPW/OCYF) Central Region was notified of the near death of the child on 06/13/2013.

Summary of DPW Child (Near) Fatality Review Activities:

The DPW/OCYF Central Region obtained and reviewed all current and past case records pertaining to the ██████████ Family. Engagement and follow up interviews were conducted with the Intake Caseworker ██████████, Caseworker ██████████, Casework Supervisor ██████████, and Director ██████████. On 07/11/2013, Cambria County CYC facilitated the Near Death Review Meeting which the Regional Office also participated.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

Cambria County CYs personnel provided information of the agency's past involvement with [REDACTED] and her family that dated back to 1990 and centered on custody disputes. In discussion with Casework Supervisor [REDACTED], the past records involving the [REDACTED] family from the 1990's is minimal. On 04/08/2002, services were initiated with the [REDACTED] family due to reports of harsh discipline, excessive alcohol use by [REDACTED], parent-child conflict and [REDACTED] behavioral issues. This case was closed on 08/31/2002. On 03/12/2003, a report regarding [REDACTED] not being properly supervised in the home was received and records indicate that the intake was rejected on 06/06/2003. A report on 09/15/2003 involved [REDACTED] incorrigibility, drug use, and truancy. [REDACTED] was returned home to her mother on 12/10/2004 after receiving [REDACTED] services at the [REDACTED]. This case was closed on 06/30/2005.

Cambria County CYs received a report on [REDACTED] on 06/05/2013. The report indicated that the child was a drug exposed infant at birth and that the biological mother tested positive for [REDACTED]. The mother was [REDACTED]. From the referral information received, a response time of ten (10) days was assigned to the case. In cases of drug exposed infants (such as this one), the Agency stated they they usually assign a ten (10) day response to the report if there are no other risk or safety factors. The caseworker assigned to the case visited the family on 06/12/2013 and noted the unusual appearance of the child and informed the mother to immediately have the child examined by a physician. The Cambria County CYs summary indicates that the mother of the child did inform the caseworker that she did not know if the infant was getting enough breast milk during his feedings. It was evident that the child's condition deteriorated over several days following his [REDACTED] the hospital. At the time of the visit, the caseworker noted that the child was crying and that there was no evidence that the child was lethargic. The caseworker was informed by the mother and she verified that the child had a regular scheduled appointment the same day as the caseworker's visit.

Circumstances of Child (Near) Fatality and Related Case Activity:

Cambria County Children and Youth Services received a report of a drug exposed infant on 06/05/2013. At the time of birth on 06/04/2013, [REDACTED] weight was documented at 5 lbs., 10 oz. Records from [REDACTED] confirm that the child was [REDACTED] on 06/06/2013. A ten (10) day response time was assigned to the report and the assigned caseworker made face to face contact with the mother and child on the seventh day. On 06/12/2013, caseworker responded to the home and child appeared small in nature and did not [REDACTED]. The mother had previously scheduled a well child examination for child on 06/12/2013. As stated earlier, the Caseworker documented that she verified that the appointment was scheduled.

On 06/12/2013, the biological mother and maternal grandmother transported the child for a regular scheduled medical checkup with [REDACTED] located in Johnstown, PA. Upon arrival at the [REDACTED] office, it was noted that the child was not doing well physically. It was reported that child was unable to cry; only whimper. The child was severely dehydrated, and within eight (8) days of birth lost 25% of his birth weight (4 lbs., 3 oz. at time of appointment). It was recorded that the child's sodium level was 170 (top normal is 150) verifying that the child was dehydrated. The child's blood sugar was 33 (low normal is 40). It was decided that the child be immediately transported to Conemaugh Hospital in Johnstown, PA. It was then decided to life flight the child to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh on the same date. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] with Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh reported to Cambria County Children and Youth Services that the child was progressing from the time he was [REDACTED] to the [REDACTED] facility, but did not have an anticipated [REDACTED] date. On 06/13/2013, [REDACTED], intake caseworker with Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families visited with the child and deemed that the child appeared safe in the environment of the hospital.

It was also communicated that the infant was still experiencing withdrawal from his exposure to [REDACTED]. The infant was [REDACTED] to ease the withdrawal symptoms. Social Worker [REDACTED] indicated that she had concerns that the medical center where the child was born would discharge a newborn experiencing withdrawal symptom. She informed Cambria County CYS that Children's Hospital would not discharge a newborn until they scored 0 on a withdrawal scale. She reported that [REDACTED] had been [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was weaned [REDACTED] during the week of June 24, 2013. It is noted that the social worker assessed the parents to be appropriate and that she does not view that the child's condition was intentional in any way. The child's mother reported that she was feeding the infant every three (3) hours for the past week but the child was only in need of a diaper change three (3) to four (4) times per day (vs. a normal average of six (6) to eight (8) diaper changes). [REDACTED] felt that the issue was related to breast feeding, that the child was not receiving adequate nutrients, and that the parents needed educated on caring for the infant. The child was administered [REDACTED] and there was no evidence [REDACTED] and that the child's blood sugar and sodium levels were nearing normal limits. [REDACTED] informed the CYS Agency that the nurses tending to the child are in his room constantly and that she did not feel that the parents are a danger to the child. The infant was [REDACTED] the hospital on 06/28/2013 and returned to the care of his mother.

On 07/11/2013, Cambria County CYS concluded the abuse report as unfounded and referred the case to general protective services (GPS) to ensure that services would be afforded to the family. The mother was assessed as being the only caregiver for [REDACTED] since his birth. [REDACTED] re-affirmed that she did not feel as though [REDACTED] condition at the time of his admission was intentional. It was assessed that the mother was not producing enough breast milk (estimated at only one (1) bottle per day) to sustain the infant's needs. According to the social worker, a lactation nurse referenced that no mother who is using [REDACTED] should solely breastfeed. The hospital worked with the mother in supplementing breast milk with formula and the child began to gain weight immediately.

Current Case Status:

The GPS case is still active with Cambria County CYC at the time of this report. Reports indicate that the mother of [REDACTED] has cooperated fully with the services the agency initiated. The agency, along with [REDACTED] initiated [REDACTED] visits through the [REDACTED] which has an office in Ebensburg, PA. The [REDACTED] with the agency visited the family three (3) times per week. These visits lasted three (3) consecutive weeks after [REDACTED] from [REDACTED]. This service concluded during the week of July 19, 2013 when it was deemed unnecessary due to the child's progress. At the time the service was concluded, the child [REDACTED].

Cambria County CYC utilizes agency social workers to work with families in need. Social worker, [REDACTED], has continued working with the mother on parenting while at the same time ensuring the child's needs are met. The social work has also directed [REDACTED] to community resources such as housing and [REDACTED] continues to work with [REDACTED] in regards to her significant relationships which are deemed [REDACTED]. During the involvement with Cambria County CYC, both the child's father, [REDACTED], and the mother's paramour, [REDACTED], have been arrested and incarcerated for different charges. Records indicate that both men have a history of drug abuse. The social worker continues to work with the family in the areas of relapse prevention via maintaining [REDACTED], enhanced decision making and enhance parenting skills.

Records indicate that [REDACTED] has been compliant with her involvement with [REDACTED]. This agency worked with [REDACTED] with her addiction and approved and monitored her [REDACTED]. It is noted that the mother has admitted to [REDACTED] and that she does not intend to stop using it. During the beginning of September 2013, she made the decision to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] will continue working with [REDACTED] on her [REDACTED] has also received services from [REDACTED] for her [REDACTED] needs [REDACTED] but has since been receiving [REDACTED] services from [REDACTED]. The mother reported that she receives [REDACTED]. The agency also arranged for the family to be enrolled in [REDACTED] which is a Cambria County provider of [REDACTED] services. Records indicated a delay in services commencing, but the [REDACTED] services were initiated at the beginning of August 2013.

[REDACTED] has also been enrolled in [REDACTED] that will assist the mother in completing community service hours via participating in a "work crew" due from a previous criminal charge of burglary received during 2011 and to afford her time to search for employment. Cambria County Caseworker [REDACTED] and Social Worker [REDACTED] continue to work with the mother to ensure that she continues to attend medical appointments for her son at the [REDACTED]. The family service plan was completed on 09/12/2013 and outlines the services afforded to the family and the objectives/goals for the mother to achieve. At the time of this report, [REDACTED] weight was 15 lbs., and he has received [REDACTED]. The mother reported to the caseworker that the child's [REDACTED] stated that he (the child) is [REDACTED].

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

- Strengths:
 - The agency maintained consistent communication with the Children's' Hospital of Pittsburgh.
 - Services for the child and family were implemented efficiently.
- Deficiencies:
 - No deficiencies were identified.
- Recommendations for Change at the Local Level:
 - Meetings will occur between the hospital, CYS agency, and other relevant organizations for the purposes of reviewing the policies related to drug exposed infants. This recommendation is in relation to the infant having withdrawal symptoms when admitted to CHOP after he was born at [REDACTED] Medical Center.
 - Discussions with [REDACTED] services about time frame for [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] infants born drug exposed will occur.
- Recommendations for Change at the State Level:
 - No recommendations were identified.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The report from Cambria County CYS was received by the Regional Office on 07/12/2013. The report details the topics that were discussed during the Near Death Review meeting held on 07/11/2013. The CYS agency conducted the investigation and ensured that the Cambria County Assistant District Attorney, [REDACTED], was apprised for their progress and final outcome. There were no deficiencies identified.

Department of Public Welfare Findings:

- County Strengths:
 - Cambria County CYS was quick in informing the OCYF Central Region Office of the near death of [REDACTED].
 - The agency was also expedient to ensure there were services in place upon the child's discharge from the Children's' Hospital of Pittsburgh.
 - The agency has compiled an effective Multi-Disciplinary Team (MTD); members of which represent a wide array of community services and supports. The MDT team was supportive of the agency's response and actions to the report on [REDACTED].
 - Collaboration was evident between the agency and medical representatives.

- County Weaknesses:
 - No deficiencies were identified.

- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance:
 - All regulations regarding CPS investigation and subsequent county services were followed. Upon receiving information of the near death of [REDACTED], a conversation occurred between the Regional Office and representatives of Cambria County CYS in relation to the response time (10 days) that was assigned to the report of a drug exposed infant. The CYS personnel stated that the agency's screeners take reports of neglect, and that supervisors review the report(s) collectively and assign appropriate response times in accordance with the GPS Response Time Bulletin. In cases of drug exposed infants, the agency usually assigns a 10 day response to the report if there are no other risk or safety factors. In relation to the [REDACTED] case, agency personnel assessed having the caseworker wait a matter of days to respond to the home may have been positive in that the child would have been viewed in an healthy condition if the child visit occurred shortly after discharge from the hospital.

Department of Public Welfare Recommendations:

The Regional Office completed interviews and obtained records as required. The agency provided appropriate services to the family and ensured the safety of the child in the home. The case is currently active with Cambria County CYS. The Regional Office has no recommendations at this time.