



## REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[REDACTED]

**Date of Birth:** 01-14-2017

**Date of Incident:** 04-15-2017

**Date of Report to ChildLine:** 04-15-2017

**CWIS Referral ID:** [REDACTED]

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

Cambria County Children and Youth Services

### REPORT FINALIZED ON:

12/27/2017

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.

Cambria County was required to convene a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. Cambria County Children and Youth Services (CYS) facilitated the Act 33 meeting on 05/11/2017.

**Family Constellation:**

| <u>First and Last Name:</u> | <u>Relationship:</u> | <u>Date of Birth</u> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| [REDACTED]                  | Victim Child         | 01/04/2017           |
| [REDACTED]                  | Mother               | [REDACTED] 1988      |
| [REDACTED]                  | Father               | [REDACTED] 1987      |
| [REDACTED]                  | Half-Sibling         | [REDACTED] 2005      |
| [REDACTED]                  | Half-Sibling         | [REDACTED] 2007      |
| [REDACTED]                  | Half-sibling         | [REDACTED] 2012      |
| [REDACTED]                  | Half-sibling         | [REDACTED] 2015      |

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

The Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (CROCYF) reviewed case records pertaining to the family. CROCYF representative engaged Cambria County CYF director and caseworkers concerning the case and the representative participated in the Act 33 meeting.

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

Cambria County CYF informed CROCYF that the agency did not have prior involvement with the family. The CYF agency was able to identify that the family did have history in Newark, New Jersey. The intakes involved parental use of [REDACTED]. The reports occurred during October 2010, June 2011, and January 2012. With each report, the case was closed with referrals to [REDACTED] for the mother.

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

The 3-month-old male child nearly died on 04/15/2017 due to serious physical neglect (failure to provide child with nutrition/hydration). The child's mother called

911 due to child being unresponsive and having difficulty breathing. The patient presented to the [REDACTED] emergency department via Emergency Medical Services due to difficulty breathing. The patient appeared severely malnourished. The patient was very thin. The patient was in respiratory distress and he required intubation due to difficulties breathing. The patient was very dehydrated with sunken fontanelles. The patient required intubation and fluid hydration. The child was transferred to [REDACTED] via helicopter because of his critical condition. There were no physical signs of abuse. The patient appeared severely neglected and severely malnourished. Medical practitioners informed Cambria County CYS that there have been no identified underlying medical conditions that would have resulted in the child being so severely malnourished. The identified child weighed the same as he did at birth, 5.1 lbs.

There were 4 other children in the home and [REDACTED] checked on mother's other children in the household, and stated that they appeared well. A safety plan was put in place for a 2-year-old sibling due to the child's age and being non-verbal. A Maternal Uncle was in the home visiting for the Easter holiday and he committed to ensuring that this respective child would not have unsupervised time with the mother and he ensured that the child would be fed. Three older siblings all reported how they are fed, what they eat, what their normal dinner times are and what snacks they get. There were no concerns with their presentation and appearance.

The victim child was discharged from CHP on 05/08/2017 and placed in the care of his father. The child gained 2.5 lbs. during his care at CHP. Cambria County (CYS) indicated the case on 05/24/2017 naming the child's mother as the perpetrator by commission as she failed to provide her child with the adequate essential of life including food and medical care.

The father was not party to the child's maltreatment and took over custody once he was made aware of the incident. The case was referred to New Jersey Department of Youth and Family Services. Due to a General Protective Services Report concerning the mother's inability to produce evidence that her other children were receiving appropriate medical care, Cambria County CYS has initiated services for the mother and her other children on 05/23/2017. The CYS agency was utilizing the mother's neighbors to monitor the food intake of the siblings. On 06/13/2017, the agency enrolled the family in an In Home Parenting Counseling program facilitated by a local service provider. It was noted in family's case records that during the month of June 2017, the mother and her four other children went to New Jersey to obtain one of the child's birth certificates and informed the assigned caseworker that she would be returning after June 28<sup>th</sup> which was a scheduled custody hearing in New Jersey.

Case narratives indicate that the mother opted to remain in New Jersey for the summer and communication was minimal as the mother's cellular phone was disconnected. The caseworker assigned to the case sent letters to the mother, visited the family's residence, communicated with child welfare offices in New Jersey in attempts to communicate and locate the family but to no avail. The agency sent a letter on 08/15/2017 requesting the mother contact the agency. The family notified

a private provider that they were again residing in the Cambria County area and the agency was able to complete an announced home visit with the family on 09/27/2017. There were no concerns with the care of children and the two year old was active and appeared healthy. Services (In Home Parenting) once again were being afforded to the family.

During July 2017, the assigned detective informed Cambria County CYS representatives that he did not think he was going to present the evidence that he had to the county's District Attorney. At the time of this report, the City of Johnstown Police Department had not initiated formal criminal charges against the child's mother.

**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

NA

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

NA

- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse

NA

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

NA

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

NA

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

The CROCYF received the Cambria County CYS Child Near Fatality Review Team Summary on May 11, 2017. Upon review of the report, CROCYF assessed that the documentation efficiently described the incident, the actions taken by the agencies involved, and the current status of the case. There were no issues or concerns regarding the content of the report.

### **Department of Human Services Findings:**

- County Strengths:

The agency communicated with child welfare services in New Jersey to ensure that the father's home was safe prior to the child being placed into the custody of the father. The agency also ensure that the Child Welfare agency in New Jersey received relevant medical information on the victim child.

- County Weaknesses:

At the time of this report, CROCYF has not identified any County weaknesses.

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

At the time of this report, CROCYF has not identified areas of regulatory non-compliance.

### **Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

The CROCYF has no recommendations in regards to this incident.