

**Fatalities:**

**Cumberland County:**

1. A one-month old male child died on September 1, 2011 due to physical injuries. Cumberland County Children and Youth Services substantiated the report in October of 2011 and named the father as the perpetrator. Emergency responders were contacted by the father due to the child being unresponsive. Upon arrival, emergency responders determined the child was in cardiac arrest and they transported the child to the hospital. The child suffered rib fractures, retinal hemorrhaging and blood was found on the brain. The father admitted to shaking the child and said that he did this when the child woke-up in the middle of the night and began crying. There is an older sibling who was living in the home at the time of the incident and is now living with a maternal grandmother. The mother of the children was incarcerated at the time the incident occurred due to a prior Driving Under the Influence conviction. There had been two prior referrals to the county agency prior to the incident. The first referral was in June of 2008 concerning inappropriate discipline by the mother towards the older sibling and drug use by the mother. The county agency assessed the family and after the mother tested negative for drug use and refused to have services provided to her, the county agency closed the case. The second referral was made August 5, 2011 when the victim child was born early and the hospital suspected drug use by the mother due to the child's meconium testing positive for marijuana. However, this test was later determined to be a false-positive, as further testing showed that neither the child nor the mother tested positive for marijuana. It was also reported that the father was under law enforcement investigation for drug trafficking. The county agency was assessing the family for services when the child's death occurred. The father has been charged with criminal homicide and aggravated assault as a result of the incident. The father is currently incarcerated.

**Fayette County:**

2. A four-year old male child died on September 13, 2011 due to physical injuries. Fayette County Children and Youth Services substantiated the report in September of 2011 and named the mother and her paramour as perpetrators. The mother and her paramour brought the child to the hospital because the child became unresponsive. Upon medical examination, it was found that the child had multiple bruises to the abdomen, back, legs, bruising around the eyes and fingerprint marks to the neck. The mother reported that the child fell down a flight of stairs the previous night and also had fallen at a playground a few days earlier. The physicians who examined the child concluded the child's injuries were the result of non-accidental trauma and concluded someone caused the child's injuries and ultimately his death. The mother reported that she had witnessed her paramour hitting the child in the past. Therefore, the mother was named as a perpetrator by omission for failing to protect the child. There had been five referrals made to the county agency between January of 2011 and July of 2011. The first referral made in January of 2011 involved allegations that the paramour had been hitting the child and that he has behavioral health issues and outstanding warrants from two states. The family was assessed for services and no services were offered. The second referral was

made on March 14, 2011 involving allegations that the paramour was hitting the child and that the police were called to the home because the paramour threatened to shoot relatives that were confronting him about hitting the child. The county agency did not respond to this referral. The third referral was made on March 15, 2011 involving allegations that the child was very fearful when a relative was bathing him and that the paramour killed a dog that lived in the home. The county agency did not respond to this referral. The fourth referral was made on March 22, 2011 involving allegations that the paramour is hitting the child and that the mother and her paramour are using drugs. The mother took a drug test and tested positive for medication that she was legally prescribed. The intake was closed a month later on April 20, 2011. The fifth referral was made on July 1, 2011 when the family had returned to Fayette County after residing briefly in West Virginia. The referral was assessed by the county agency and closed on July 12, 2011. The child has no siblings. The paramour has been charged with criminal homicide and the mother has been charged with endangering the welfare of a child and both are incarcerated.

**Lackawanna County:**

3. A one-month old male child died on August 9, 2011 due to physical injuries. Lackawanna County Children and Youth Services substantiated the report in October of 2011 and named the father as the perpetrator. The father contacted emergency responders to report that he found the child not breathing while checking on the child as he was asleep. Upon medical examination at the hospital, it was found that the child had suspicious injuries indicative of being shaken. The father eventually admitted to becoming frustrated with the child's crying and shook him to try and get him to stop crying. The mother of the child was at work when the incident occurred. There is an older sibling, one year of age, living in the home that was also present when the incident occurred. This sibling is a half sibling of the child and is not a child of the father. This sibling received a medical examination, including full skeletal and eye examinations, due to the incident and no concerns were found. The sibling and the mother are currently residing with the father's relatives in another county because the mother does not have any relatives in the area. The children and youth agency in that county is providing ongoing services to the mother and sibling due to behavioral health concerns of the mother and lack of bonding between the mother and the sibling. The county agency was not involved with the family prior to the incident. The father has been charged with criminal homicide, endangering the welfare of a child and simple assault and is currently incarcerated.

**Philadelphia County:**

4. A four-year old male child died on July 14, 2011 due to physical injuries he received that were the result of lack of supervision. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services substantiated the report in August of 2011 and named the father as the perpetrator. The child found a loaded gun lying on a table and shot himself in the head. The mother was not at home when the incident occurred and the child was at home with the father when he sustained the injury. The child has two older siblings, ages 2 years

and 1 year. The mother and the siblings were at a friend's house when the incident occurred. The siblings have been placed with the maternal grandmother and a maternal aunt, who share a home, due to concerns that the mother is supportive of the father and had knowledge of loaded guns being kept unsecured in the home. The mother had attempted to post bail for the father and does not believe that the father should be held responsible. The father has been charged with manslaughter, endangering the welfare of a child, possession of a prohibited firearm, possession of a fire arm with an altered manufacturer's number, carrying an unlicensed firearm and possessing an instrument of crime. The father continues to be incarcerated and a preliminary hearing is scheduled for March of 2012. This family was not known to the county prior to the incident.

5. A one-year old male child died on July 24, 2011 due to ingesting methadone. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services substantiated the report in August of 2011 and named the parents as the perpetrators. The child was found unresponsive by his parents and emergency responders were contacted. The child was examined at the emergency room and was found to have bruising to his forehead; however the medical examination determined the bruising to be consistent with a non-inflicted, accidental occurrence. A later medical examination conducted by the city medical examiner revealed the child tested positive for methadone intoxication and this caused the child's death. Both parents abuse heroin and are involved in methadone maintenance programs. The mother reported that the child likely ingested the methadone because she became ill and vomited methadone into the child's bottle of milk. During the investigation, the child's bottle was examined and it was determined methadone was present in the bottle. However, according to the medical examiner, the child's methadone levels were extremely high and the mother's account is not consistent with these high levels. The investigation by the county agency concluded that one of the parents likely mixed methadone with the child's milk and purposely gave it to him. There is an older sibling who has been living with the maternal grandmother since January of 2009 as a result of the mother reportedly giving the sibling methadone. However, this was never reported to the county agency. The grandmother, on her own, gained custody of the sibling due to these concerns. The family was not known to the county agency prior to the investigation. There is a criminal investigation pending and no charges have been filed.

6. A nine-month old male child died on July 25, 2011 due to ingestion of drugs. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services substantiated the report in August of 2011 and named a maternal cousin of the child and her paramour as the perpetrators. The child had been staying with these two individuals due to housing concerns at the mother's home which caused the child to experience respiratory complications. The child had preexisting respiratory issues which prompted this arrangement to be made. The county agency was not involved with the family. The cousin contacted emergency responders because she had found the child having difficulty breathing. Upon medical examination at the hospital, the child was found to have bruising to his body, possible burn marks to legs and buttocks which were later determined during the autopsy to not be burn marks. The child also had intravenous marks to his hands. The autopsy found cocaine and opiates in the child's system. The cousin and her paramour are known heroin users. Although no disclosure has been made, the investigation by the county agency

determined these two individuals were responsible for the child and likely caused the child's death. There is an older sibling who was living with the maternal grandmother during the investigation as a precaution due to the uncertainty of the nature of the child's death. This sibling has since returned to the mother. The county agency is providing in-home services to the mother and the sibling including grief services and parenting skills as there are concerns about the sibling missing medical appointments. The cousin who was named as a perpetrator in this case has children who are now living with their father and paternal grandmother due to the investigation. There is a criminal investigation pending and no charges have been filed.

7-8. A twelve-year old female child and her eight-year old male sibling died on August 31, 2011 due to being stabbed. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services substantiated both reports in September of 2011 and named the mother as the perpetrator. The children lived with their mother, maternal grandparents and a maternal aunt. The maternal aunt and maternal grandmother found the children stabbed to death in their bedroom. The mother was also in the bedroom. The mother had attempted to commit suicide, but was conscious when she and the children were discovered. The mother confessed to stabbing the children. Neither the maternal aunt nor the maternal grandmother were home when the incident occurred. However, the maternal grandfather was at home, but did not hear the incident occurring. The mother has a long history of behavioral health issues and tried to overdose on a few occasions in the past. The most recent incident of attempted overdose occurred in 2007. The mother was receiving out-patient services for her behavioral health issues and her last appointment took place the day before the incident occurred. The mother moved to the United States in 2006 and the children moved here in 2010. This family was not known to the county agency prior to the incident. There are no additional siblings in the family. The mother has been charged with homicide and is currently incarcerated.

9. A nine-month old male child died on September 5, 2011 due to drowning as a result of lack of supervision. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services substantiated the report in September of 2011 and named the mother as the perpetrator. The mother was bathing the child and left the child unattended. Upon returning, she found the child unconscious and submerged under water. The mother took the child to a staff person, who contacted emergency responders. The mother was living in a transitional housing program for homeless women and their children when the incident occurred. The child had a twin sibling and an older sibling who are now living with their maternal grandmother. The county agency has opened a case regarding those children and is providing protective services. The mother is currently residing with a paternal aunt. This family was not known to the county agency prior to the incident. There is a criminal investigation pending.

**Near Fatalities:****Berks County:**

1. A four-year old male child nearly died on July 14, 2011 as the result of medical neglect, malnutrition, and failure to thrive. Berks County Children and Youth Services substantiated the report in August of 2011 and named the child's mother and father as the perpetrators. The child weighed 19 ½ pounds, was unable to walk, and could not talk. The parents admitted that they never took the child to a doctor or to a dentist, despite recognizing that there was something wrong with the child. The child required hospitalization, and following discharge from the hospital, the child was admitted to an inpatient rehabilitation facility. He is currently in a foster home with caregivers able to care for his special needs, and he has made significant social and physical recovery. The parents have voluntarily relinquished their parental rights to the child. The child's siblings have been removed from the parents' care due to this incident. The child's two older siblings are placed in foster care. There is also a younger sibling who has been placed with the maternal grandfather. This sibling is the only child with the maternal grandfather because he did not feel he could care for all of the children. The county agency is currently in the process of seeking family members who are able to care for all of the children. All of the children were medically examined, and the older siblings were determined to be healthy. The younger sibling was underweight, however he was not malnourished. It was determined that the younger sibling is in need of early intervention services and services are currently being provided to ensure all of his needs are met. This family was not previously known to the county agency. Both parents have been arrested and charged with endangering the welfare of children. The mother was released on bail, but the father remains incarcerated.

**Delaware County**

2. A four-month old female child nearly died on July 20, 2011 as the result of numerous physical injuries, which were in various stages of healing. Delaware County Children and Youth Services substantiated the report in September of 2011 and named the child's mother as the perpetrator. The child began seizing upon arrival at the hospital and was subsequently diagnosed with ten fractured ribs, a subdural hematoma, global hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy, a spinal ligamentous injury, bilateral diffused retinal hemorrhages, left wrist fracture, right distal femur fracture, right tibia fracture, and liver lacerations. There was no reasonable medical explanation for the injuries, and the child's mother was unable to provide a history of trauma consistent with the injuries. Medical professionals determined the injuries were "highly specific for abuse," and the mother was the child's primary caregiver during the time period when the injuries were inflicted. The child is currently in a rehabilitation facility. She has a breathing tube and she is also being tube fed. She will remain in the facility until she is stable and then she will be discharged to a medical foster home. The child has an older brother who has been placed in foster care as the result of this incident. The child also has an older half brother who is residing with his father. The criminal investigation is pending and no charges have been filed at this time. This family was not previously known to the county agency.

**Montgomery County**

3. A six-month old male child nearly died on August 13, 2011 due to multiple physical injuries. Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth substantiated the report in August of 2011 and named the father and mother as perpetrators. The father was named as the perpetrator of physical abuse, and the child's mother was named as the perpetrator of medical neglect and for physical abuse by omission. The mother left the child in the father's care for approximately three hours. When the mother returned home, she found bloody diapers in the trash can and blood all over the walls. The child did not receive medical care until the following day when a relative took the child to the hospital. The child was lethargic when he arrived at the hospital. The child was found to have anal lacerations, internal tearing, and bruising in multiple stages to his head, face, back, belly, and super-pubic area. The child has been discharged from the hospital and he is currently residing, along with his sister, with the maternal grandfather. The mother had a protection from abuse order against the father for herself. However, the mother denied that the father had ever been physically abusive toward the child in the past. The father was arrested on charges related to sexual and physical assault and is currently incarcerated. The mother was arrested and charged with endangering the welfare of children and was released on bail. The county agency has implemented a safety plan that the mother is to have no contact with the child or his sister. This family was not previously known to the county agency.

4. A five-month old male child nearly died on September 26, 2011 due to head injuries. Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth substantiated the report in October of 2011 and named the child's father as the perpetrator of physical abuse. The child suffered two seizures, and was subsequently diagnosed with an acute subdural hematoma to the right frontal lobe. The child was in the care of his father when he sustained the injuries. The father admitted to the police that he shook the child. The father is currently incarcerated on charges of aggravated assault, simple assault, reckless endangerment, and endangering the welfare of children. The mother remains in the home with the child and his older brother. The county determined that the safety plan was no longer necessary, as the mother has been deemed capable of caring for and protecting the children. This family was not previously known to the county agency.

**Philadelphia County**

5. A four-month old male child nearly died on August 24, 2011 due to head injuries. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services substantiated the report in September of 2011 and named the mother and father as the perpetrators of physical abuse. The child was diagnosed with a subdural hematoma with chronic and acute bleeding. The physician stated the injuries were non-accidental in nature. Both parents were the primary caregivers for the child. Neither parent was able to provide a credible history of how the injuries were sustained. The child is currently residing in a kinship home with his adult paternal cousin. There were no other children in the home. The family was not previously known to the county agency. No criminal charges have been filed.

6. A five-month old female child nearly died on September 17, 2011 due to head injuries. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services substantiated the report in October of 2011 and named the child's father as the perpetrator of physical abuse. The child was diagnosed with a subdural hematoma and a skull fracture, resulting from abusive head trauma. The physician stated the varied ages of the injuries were consistent with the time the child was in the father's care in Philadelphia as well as when the child was in her mother's care in New Jersey. The father was unable to provide a history consistent with the injuries. The Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) in New Jersey is currently investigating the mother's involvement with the child's injuries. The family was not previously known to the county agency nor to child welfare officials in New Jersey. The child is currently in a foster home in New Jersey through DYFS. No criminal charges have been filed at this time.

7. A three-year old female child nearly died on September 23, 2011 as the result of blunt force trauma. The Philadelphia Department of Human services substantiated the report in October of 2011 and named the mother's paramour as the perpetrator of physical abuse and the mother as the perpetrator by omission for failing to protect the child. The child had difficulty breathing, liver and spleen lacerations, and blood in the abdomen. Additionally, the child had bruising to her back and belly, a pulmonary contusion, a missing front tooth, and a small laceration inside her vaginal area. The child's mother was unable to provide a history of trauma that was consistent with the injuries. Family members reported that the child began having bruises when the mother's paramour moved into the home. The paramour was unable to provide a consistent history for how the bruises occurred, yet the mother continued to leave the child in the paramour's care even after she continued to have unexplained bruises. There were no other children residing in the home. The county agency was not previously involved with the family. The child has been discharged from the hospital, and she is residing in a foster home. There have been no criminal charges filed for this incident at this time.

### **Westmoreland County**

8. A five-month old male child nearly died on September 15, 2011 from head injuries. The Westmoreland County Children's Bureau substantiated the report in October of 2011 and named the child's father as the perpetrator of physical abuse. The child was diagnosed with bilateral retinal hemorrhages and a subdural hematoma, which medical professionals determined to be the result of the child being shaken. The physician determined that age of the injuries was consistent with the time when the child was in the sole care of his father. The child has made a significant recovery and was released from the hospital. He is currently residing with his mother and twin sister, and the mother is following through with the child's necessary medical care. The father was arrested and charged with aggravated assault, simple assault, endangering the welfare of children, and recklessly endangering another person. The father was released on bail, under the condition that he is not to have contact with any children. The mother has also agreed to a safety plan not to allow the father any contact with their children. This family was not previously known to the county agency.