



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

REPORT ON THE FATALITY OF:

Mathias Phillips

Date of Birth: 12/03/2013

Date of Death: 01/08/2014

Date of Oral Report: 01/09/2014

FAMILY KNOWN TO:

Greene County Children and Youth Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

06/22/2015

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, DHS 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. Greene County has convened a review team in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report on February 25, 2014.

Family Constellation:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED]/86
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED]/82
Mathias Phillips	Victim Child	12/03/13
[REDACTED]	Brother	[REDACTED]/08
[REDACTED]	Brother	[REDACTED]/09
[REDACTED]	Brother	[REDACTED]/12
[REDACTED]	Maternal Great Grandmother	Unknown
[REDACTED]	Paternal Grandmother	Unknown

Notification of Child Fatality:

On January 09, 2014, [REDACTED] came to Greene County Children and Youth Services (CYS) and notified Greene County CYC that they had been called to the morgue to see a one month old victim child that had died in a home the day before. The mother reported that she found the victim child dead in her own bed, face down in a pillow. Paramedics were called at 10:19 a.m. on January 08, 2014. The paramedics attempted to perform Cardio pulmonary resuscitation on the victim child. The victim child was taken to the ambulance and could not be resuscitated. The mother was not consistent with details in her story and could not remember if she rolled over on the victim child. The mother says it was her responsibility. The mother legally takes [REDACTED], so she was medicated at the time of incident. The coroner felt that the mother was under the influence of something at the time of incident. The mother has previous Greene County CYC involvement; most recently due to medical neglect. The mother has three older children. The family has been working with [REDACTED] parenting skills program, so it was likely that the mother has been educated regarding safe sleeping.

Summary of DPW Child Fatality Review Activities:

The Western Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families obtained and reviewed all current and past case records pertaining to the family. The Western Region Office also participated in the County Internal Fatality Review Team meetings on February 25, 2014 where copies of the family file and account of previous actions by the county were discussed. The caseworker and supervisor were also interviewed on February 25, 2014 to discuss the events of their investigation.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

In June 2011, Greene County Children and Youth were requested to make a courtesy visit to the family's home at the request of the State of Ohio. The family had an open case in Ohio at the time of the request.

In August 2011, a case was opened due to the family deciding to make Greene County, Pennsylvania their permanent residence. The family followed through with services required by Greene County Children and Youth and the case was closed in January 2012.

In October 2013, a General Protective Services report for medical neglect was received. The oldest child has [REDACTED] and the doctor had concerns due to the child's levels being off. The hospital did not believe that [REDACTED]. The county assisted the parents in getting to the follow-up medical appointments and additional training was provided to the parents on how to [REDACTED]. Greene County Children and Youth closed the case in December 2013.

Circumstances of the Child Fatality and Related Case Activity:

Greene County Children and Youth were informed of the child fatality on January 9, 2014. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] came to the Greene County CYS Office and reported that they had been called to the morgue to see a one month old victim child that had died at his home. The cause of death was believed to have been asphyxiation, and that was later confirmed by the Greene County Coroner who informed Greene County Children and Youth of the final results of the autopsy on the victim child. The Greene County Coroner stated that it will be ruled a Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) death. The Greene County Coroner had thought pneumonia, but there were no signs. The Greene County Coroner also had suspicions of mother rolling over on the child, but there was not enough evidence to support either of these causes. The mother was questioned in the home by [REDACTED] and the mother was unable to explain how the incident occurred the house was messy and only had one source of heat. There were air mattresses and throw blankets for the children and during the questioning the mother was not consistent in her explanations of what occurred. [REDACTED] also had concerns that the victim child's older sibling may have had something to do with the child's death. [REDACTED]

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The report was received from Greene County Children and Youth on April 5, 2014. There have been ongoing discussions with Greene County Children and Youth as to recommendations to improve the county processes on cases from out of state as well as within their own county.

Department of Human Services Findings:

County Strengths: Greene County Children and Youth responded to the incident quickly and ensured safety of the other children in the home and returned the children after an in depth assessment and capabilities of the family.

County Weaknesses: Greene County Children and Youth should have requested the family record sooner than they did when this family came to Pennsylvania from Ohio. Also, Greene County Children and Youth should have assessed the home and during the course of interviewing the family questioned whether or not they were going to reside in Pennsylvania.

Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance:

No areas of non-compliance were noted.

Department of Public Welfare Recommendations:

It is recommended that Greene County Children and Youth create or change policy concerning families that come from out of state or other counties in gathering information on prior Children and Youth agency involvement. Follow through with the ACT 33 Law in any current or future fatalities or near fatalities. Greene County Children and Youth also need to review the MDT process in order to complete the meeting and report in accordance with the Act 33 Law. If the law is not adhered to once the bulletin is finalized then a citation will be issued.