



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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



**Date of Birth: 01/02/2016**  
**Date of Incident: 03/02/2016**  
**Date of Report to ChildLine: 03/02/2016**  
**CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]**

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

Fulton County Children and Youth Services

### **REPORT FINALIZED ON:**

08/10/2016

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.

Fulton County Children and Youth Services (CYS) completed their investigation and filed the report with ChildLine as Unfounded on 3/29/2016 which is before the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the investigation. A review team did not need to be convened.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	01/02/2016
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1974
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED] 1976
[REDACTED]	Half-Sibling	[REDACTED] 2012

**Summary of OCYF Child Near 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 conducted interviews with the following Fulton County Staff: Intake Supervisor and Agency Administrator. These interviews occurred on 03/04/2016 and 04/05/2016.

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

Fulton County CYS has not experienced prior involvement with the victim child or his family.

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

On 03/02/2016, Fulton County CYS received a report [REDACTED] stating that the victim child had been present for his 2 month well-child check and did not appear to be gaining appropriate weight. The child weighed 7 pounds, 2 ounces at 18 days old, and 8 pounds, 13 ounces at 60 days. It was also reported that the child had not had a bowel movement in 3 weeks. The child also appeared ill, emaciated, had temporal wasting, severe ankyloglossia, and hard scaphoid abdomen. The child was certified by the physician at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to be in serious or critical condition and would be considered a near fatality. The mother was instructed to transport the child to Hershey Medical Center. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] allowed the mother to leave with the child.

The mother immediately took the child to the emergency room at Hershey Medical Center and the child was admitted initially as a failure to thrive case. The Fulton

County Caseworker visited with the mother, father, and child within 24 hours at the hospital. The caseworker also spoke with the attending physician, who indicated that he had no suspicion of abuse or neglect and the hospital was conducting tests before coming to any conclusions about the child's condition.

The mother stated that they had taken the child for a well-check appointment. The doctor's normal physician was not available so they were seen by another physician. The doctor was concerned about the child's slow weight gain, but when the mother talked about the child not having a bowel movement in 3 weeks, she stated that the doctor became very upset. She reported that the doctor started rattling off diagnoses that the child must have and told them that if they didn't take the child to the emergency room, CYS would be involved. The mother stated that she had not been concerned about the bowel movements because her 3 year old child had similar issues when he was an infant, and her doctor had told her that this could happen when children are breast fed. She stated that she always felt like the child ate enough and was fed frequently. They had run tests at Hershey Medical Center and determined that the child had [REDACTED] which could be impeding the bowel movements, but that [REDACTED] on its own. She also reported that the child had a large bowel movement while at the hospital. The doctors reported no concern with the parents, or with the mother feeding the child. The parents were fully cooperative with the agency questioning and involvement.

The child [REDACTED] on 03/06/2016 to the parents. The agency followed up with home visits and gathered medical information. The child was gaining weight and having infrequent bowel movements, but the physicians did not have concern with this, [REDACTED]

The family also indicated that they would be pursuing a formal complaint against the original physician because they felt that she acted inappropriately and unprofessionally.

Fulton County CYS filed their investigation report with ChildLine as Unfounded on 03/29/2016 with a determination that the child had not been maltreated. It was determined that the child's condition was medical related and not caused by the mother neglecting the child's nutrition. The family was opened for ongoing protective services on this date as the agency will be monitoring the family to assure that there is follow-up on medical appointments and that the needs of the children continue to be met. The family was in agreement with agency involvement. A Family Service Plan was developed on 04/26/2016 with the family. The child has continued to gain weight and bowel movements have become more regular. The parents have signed releases so that the agency can follow up on medical care.

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

Fulton County CYS did not convene a review team as the report reached an unfounded disposition before the 30<sup>th</sup> day. As such, a County Child Near-Fatality report was not completed.

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

N/A

**Department of Human Services Findings:**

- County Strengths:
  - The agency immediately began the investigation, cooperating with medical personal and assuring the safety of the children involved.
  - The agency conducted very detailed and thorough interviews with the subjects of the report, as well as collateral contacts. Decisions made on the case were well-informed.
  
- County Weaknesses:
  - None noted.
  
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency.  
There were no areas of regulatory non-compliance observed.

**Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

DHS offers the following recommendations to practice as a result of the findings of this review:

- The agency should consider training opportunities for the community, to include medical professionals, on child abuse and neglect, and techniques to gather information that can help the agency when those in the community do need to make a report of suspected abuse. The agency offers community trainings and forums from time to time that could be an excellent vehicle for this kind of information.