

**Office of Children, Youth and Families**

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**REPORT ON THE FATALITY OF**

**Jovan Riley**

**DOB: 1/18/2007  
DOD: 1/14/2010**

**FAMILY WAS NOT KNOWN TO:  
York County Children & Youth Services**

**REPORT DATED 04/06/10**

This report is confidential under the provisions of the Child Protective Services Law and cannot be released.  
(23 Pa. C.S. Section 6340)

Unauthorized release is prohibited under penalty of law. (23 Pa. C.S. Section 6349 (b)).

### Reason for Review

Senate Bill No. 1147 now known as Act 33 was signed by Governor Rendell on July 3, 2008 and went into effect 180 days from that date, December 30, 2008. This Act amends the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) and sets the standards for reviewing and reporting child fatality and near child fatalities that were suspected to have occurred [REDACTED] DPW must conduct child fatality and near fatality reviews and provide a written report on any child fatality or near fatality [REDACTED]

### Family Constellation:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
Jovan Riley Jr. [REDACTED]	Victim Child	01/18/07
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED]

### Notification of Fatality/Near Fatality:

York County Children and Youth Services received a [REDACTED] referral on 01/13/10 [REDACTED] on 01/13/10 as the condition of the child was unknown. The referral stated that child allegedly shot himself in the left eye with a .22 caliber pistol. On 01/14/10 York County Children and Youth services was contacted [REDACTED] notification of the fatality report concerning the victim child. The agency began the [REDACTED] and assured safety of the sibling. All guns were removed from the property. Both parents were [REDACTED].

### Documentation Reviewed and Individuals Interviewed:

For this review Central Region interviewed:

- o [REDACTED], York County Children and Youth Caseworker
- o [REDACTED], York County Children and Youth Supervisor
- o [REDACTED], York County Children and Youth Supervisor
- o [REDACTED], York County Children and Youth Caseworker

Central Region reviewed:

- o Child Death Data Tool
- o The case file
- o Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) report
- o Police Report

### Previous CY Involvement:

There is no history of York County Children and Youth involvement with mother and father as parents. Mother had previous involvement with the agency as a teenager. There was no involvement with the parents in Allegheny County, where the couple previously resided prior to moving to York.

### **Circumstances of Child's Fatality or Near Fatality:**

Father reported that he felt threatened by someone that they had been dealing with for a Craig's List transaction. They kept getting repeated calls and the father felt that the family needed some protection. He reported that he kept the gun cocked and loaded on a shelf in the master bedroom closet. The gun was placed on a wire shelf three feet off the ground in the closet. Mother stated that she knew the father had a gun, but did not know that the gun was in the master bedroom.

Mother put victim child and his sibling, 1 year old [REDACTED] down for a nap, but not together in the same room. The victim child was placed in the master bedroom and the sibling was placed in another room. The mother heard a loud noise from the bedroom and thought that one of the children had fallen from the bed.

Mother found the victim child in the bed bleeding and called 911. 911 advised mother to move the victim child to the floor. Police responded to the 911 call. Victim child was found on the floor in the upstairs master bedroom. The .22 caliber pistol was found lying between the pillows on the bed. There was gun residue on both of the child's hands.

The victim child was flown to Hershey Medical Center in critical condition. The victim child did not have any brain activity and had to be resuscitated more than once. The bullet entered through the child's eye and exited at the back of the head. The child was on life support at Hershey Medical Center and was believed to be brain dead. The child was pronounced dead at 8:57 pm on 01/14/10, Thursday evening.

It was speculated that the child got up out of the bed and was searching through the room. At the child's height, he would have been able to see the gun on the wire self from the underside of the shelf despite it being hidden under clothes. There was only one gun in the home and the police removed it from the home.

### **Current/Most Recent Status of Case:**

The manner of the death was ruled accidental. A safety plan was developed with the parents to address weapon accessibility in the home. The [REDACTED]. The final report was [REDACTED]. Agency services were closed. The parents are separated; mother and the younger sibling reside with a maternal aunt. The father remains in the home.

### **Services to Children and Families:**

The York County Children and Youth Services [REDACTED] provided the mother with a resource directory for services for both parents including [REDACTED]. The parents are receiving [REDACTED].

### **County Strengths and Deficiencies as identified by the County's Near Fatality Report:**

**Strengths-** The agency caseworker and supervisor interviewed all parties in an efficient, professional and delicate manner given the nature of the report. There are no concerns regarding the Agency's handling of the referral for victim child's fatality.

## **County Recommendations for changes at the Local Levels as identified by Fatality Report:**

On 03/10/10, the York County Child Death Review team (CDRT) met to review the child fatality. The nature of this incident was accidental, not determined to be the result of [REDACTED]. The Child Death Review Team offers the following recommendations regarding gun safety and prevention of gun related fatalities involving youth in York County:

- Recommend that pediatricians use the American Academy for Pediatrics Bright Futures Guidance standards, which outline questions to ask at the 18 month well child checkup, including the presence and safe maintenance of firearms in the home.
- Internal York County Children & Youth Services Information and Referral forms have been updated to identify if there are firearms in the home when a referral is received by the Agency.
- On the State level, the CDRT would like to ensure that the new Safety Assessment and Management Process for Children & Youth cases captures the safety threats that could be present in the home environment, such as a safe maintenance of firearms
- For Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Month in April 2010 the York County Human Services Department will be requesting the local papers to run op-ed articles regarding the importance of gun safety in the home.
- The Regional Police urge all parents and gun owners to learn from this tragedy by securing guns and making sure to store ammunition and firearms separately.

## **Central Region Findings:**

County Strengths- Everyone involved with the investigation handled the situation in a professional and delicate manner given the nature of the report. There are no concerns regarding the Agency's handling of the referral for victim child's fatality.

## **Statutory and Regulatory Compliance Issues:**

All time frames were met with regard to the handling of the referral. The [REDACTED] and the case was discharged by the York County Children and Youth Services on 03/12/10.