REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

Date of Birth: 07/19/2017
Date of Incident: 03/18/2018
Date of Report to ChildLine: 03/18/2018
CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]

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

Northampton County Children, Youth and Families Division

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

September 6, 2018

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.

Northampton County has convened a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The county review team was convened on 04/16/2018.

**Family Constellation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First and Last Name:</th>
<th>Relationship:</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victim Child</td>
<td>07/19/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bio. Mother/Perpetrator</td>
<td>07/19/1984</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother’s Paramour/HHM</td>
<td>07/19/1961</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maternal Grandmother/HHM</td>
<td>07/19/1965</td>
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**Summary of OCYF Child (Near) Fatality Review Activities:**

The Northeast Regional Office (NERO) within the Office of Children, Youth and Families communicated with the agency via phone upon receipt of the report to review the initial referral and allegations.

NERO met periodically with Northampton County Children, Youth and Families Division (NCCYFD) for status updates and attended the Act 33 meeting convened on 04/16/2018.

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

The family was not known to NCCYFD prior to the incident.

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

NCCYFD received a Child Protective Services (CPS) referral on 03/18/2018 with allegations that the mother was causing bodily injury to the victim child, specifically by providing drugs (medically unnecessary insulin). A supplemental to this CPS was received on 03/19/2018 with the same allegations. There was reason to suspect that the abuse occurred at the family home in Northampton County and continued...
at the hospital in Lehigh County. NCCYFD completed the investigation as the family resides in Northampton County and had initiated the investigation.

On 03/13/2018 the mother took the victim child to the pediatrician for a sick visit due to child being irritable and running a low grade fever.

On 03/15/2018 the mother took the child to the emergency room (ER) as child’s symptoms were not improving. The victim child was admitted to the PICU for diarrhea and dehydration.

While admitted the victim child’s blood glucose was elevating and dropping however the c-peptides values were not corresponding. Testing was completed to rule out any natural causes. The victim child remained in the hospital so that further diagnostic testing could be completed.

On 03/18/2018 hospital staff found an empty bottle of insulin in the victim child’s room. At this time the child was placed on a 1:1 with hospital staff always present and victim child’s condition improved. A CPS referral was made at this time and the victim child was certified to be in serious condition which resulted in a near fatality investigation. The mother was named as the alleged perpetrator (AP.) The mother was the primary caretaker of the victim child and is also

NCCYFD along with Law Enforcement Officials (LEO) immediately began an investigation at the hospital. Hospital staff was interviewed so that information regarding the allegations could be gathered. In addition to the information received in the referral the hospital staff informed the investigators that toxicology and the Child Protection Team had been called in for consult. The toxicologist completed a full body scan and determined a possible injection site on one leg. All medication given at the hospital would have been through the intravenous port. Of additional concern was that the victim child had lost two pounds since her gastrointestinal follow up on 02/14/2018. During this current hospital stay the victim child had been steadily gaining weight. The hospital planned to exclude the mother from the victim child’s room while the victim child is being treated at the hospital.

LEO completed the initial interview of the mother and obtained one of each of her diabetic supplies. The NCCYFD caseworker then met with the mother. The mother signed releases of information and agreed to a safety plan that she will not be in the hospital room with the victim child. The hospital planned to continue 1:1 supervision of the victim child.

NCCYFD caseworker also completed initial interviews and gathered information from the mother’s paramour and maternal grandmother.

- The victim child is reported to have an
- The maternal grandmother admits to a history of drug abuse and reports she is currently sober.
- The mother, victim child, and maternal grandmother live in the mother’s paramour’s home. Also living in the home are the paramour’s daughter, her paramour and the mother’s paramour’s 4 grandchildren.
- The mother was in placement as a child. There are no reported concerns for drug and alcohol use by the mother however the maternal grandmother reports the mother does have
- The mother has been [redacted] since the birth of the victim child and had recent [redacted] which the paramour and maternal grandmother report has caused some [redacted]

The caseworker had scheduled to meet with the family at the home on 03/19/2018 to review potential family supports and discuss the current safety plan. On that same day NCCYFD was notified by the mother that she had been [redacted].

With the mother’s permission the caseworker met with the mother’s paramour and maternal grandmother to identify relatives and family supports. The paramour’s daughter and her family were planning on moving out of the home. Both the paramour and maternal grandmother discussed willingness to be a resource for the victim child.

NCCYFD had been completing reviews of medical charts and contacting child’s health care providers. Due to the victim child’s weight loss and the fact that the mother did not comply with a recommended swallow study an additional CPS was created alleging physical neglect, specifically failure to thrive. During the victim child’s hospital stay a swallow study was completed which determined that the child could have nothing by mouth, making the feeding schedule that the mother was following inappropriate.

NCCYFD preliminarily planned to utilize the maternal grandmother as a resource for the victim child upon discharge. On 03/28/2018 the victim child was transferred to an inpatient rehabilitation center and the maternal grandmother was learning how to feed and properly care for the victim child.

On 03/28/2018 a family group meeting was held and the mother participated via phone as she was [redacted] she returned to the paramour’s home. The mother agreed to a safety plan for an additional 30 days that all contact with the victim child be supervised by Visiting Nursing Association (VNA) or Good Shephard staff. The agency also made a referral to coordinate child’s medical needs and training of the mother and maternal grandmother.
On 04/26/2018 NCCYFD indicated the CPS naming the mother as a perpetrator of abuse for causing bodily injury specifically, providing drugs. Medical evidence supports that the insulin that was administered to the child was life threatening and child was in critical condition. The agency accepted the family for ongoing services on this date and the safety plan remained in effect.

On 05/14/2018 the victim child was discharged from the rehabilitation hospital. NCCYFD pursued Emergency Protective Custody and the victim child was placed in the kinship home of her maternal grandmother as the mother agreed to move out of the home.

On 05/17/2018 NCCYFD indicated the second CPS report naming the mother as a perpetrator for Causing Serious Physical Neglect of a Child, specifically failure to provide nutrition/hydration.

On 05/23/2018 the victim child was placed in traditional foster care due to conflict in the home and the inability for the mother to remain out of the home. NCCYFD is currently providing services to promote reunification. The agency is ensuring the special medical needs of the victim child are being met, have referred the mother for [redacted] and are continuing efforts to identify the victim child’s biological father.

This case remains an active criminal investigation.

**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:**
  - The Agency, [redacted] detective and [redacted] Police Department has worked very well together and keeping each other up to date with records and medical updates.
  - The family was offered a variety of services and family meetings to attempt to keep the child in the home setting.

- **Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families:**
  - None noted

- **Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse:**
  - None noted

- **Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies:** and
  - None noted
• Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse.
  ○ None noted

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The NERO received the county report timely on 07/16/2018. The NERO concurs with the findings in the county report.

Department of Human Services Findings:

• County Strengths: NCCYFD collaborated with medical professionals and law enforcement to complete a timely and thorough CPS investigation. The county utilized family engagement efforts in attempts to place the victim child with kinship providers.

• County Weaknesses: none noted

• Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency: none noted

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

• Education for parents regarding the dangers of administering non-prescribed medication to children.
• Education and awareness of the [redacted] including the impact/ potential side effects of medication changes.
• Engagement of family members around safe planning for individuals in [redacted]
• Referrals to programs such as Nurse Family Partnership for parents whose children present with special medical/health needs.