



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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

[REDACTED]

**Date of Birth: 4/16/13**  
**Date of Incident: 10/15/15**  
**Date of Report to ChildLine: 10/15/15**  
**CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]**

### **FAMILY KNOWN TO COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENCY AT TIME OF INCIDENT OR WITHIN THE PRECEDING 16 MONTHS:**

Northumberland County Children and Youth  
Lackawanna County Children and Youth Services

**REPORT FINALIZED ON:**  
03/17/2015

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. 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.

Northumberland County Children and Youth (NCCY) has not convened a review team meeting in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The referral was determined to be unsubstantiated within 30 days of the initial report; therefore a review team meeting was not required.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	04/16/2013
[REDACTED]	Full Sibling	[REDACTED] 2006
[REDACTED]	Full Sibling	[REDACTED] 2008
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1978
[REDACTED]*	Father	[REDACTED] 1975
[REDACTED]	Maternal Grandmother	[REDACTED] 1949
[REDACTED]	Maternal grandfather	[REDACTED] 1949

\* Denotes an individual that is not a household member or did not live in the home at the time of the incident, but is relevant to the report.

**Summary of OCYF Child Near Fatality Review Activities:**

The Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (CROCYF) obtained and reviewed all case records pertaining to the family, which included medical records and the agency casework dictation that outlined contact with the family. CROCYF held telephone conference with the Intake Director on 10/16/2015 to discuss their request for decertification and the surrounding circumstances. Follow up interviews were conducted with the Caseworker, Supervisor, Intake Director, and Administrator on 11/04/2015.

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

On 02/06/2012, NCCY received a referral regarding the family with concerns of lack of medical care, children seen on a motorcycle without a helmet, and the children were reportedly hearing "sex noises". Attempts were made to locate mother at address given, but the family was no longer at that address, as new tenants were in

the residence. A postal inquiry was done and NCCY spoke to landlord who reported that mother moved out around Christmas time without prior notice, leaving no forwarding address. The family could not be located and assessment was closed on 03/03/2012.

Lackawanna County Children and Youth Services (LCCYS) received a report on 02/04/2015 regarding severe burns the child sustained on her left hand, wrist, right thumb, right index finger, right middle finger, and right upper chest. The mother stated that the child pulled a hot pot of macaroni and cheese on herself. The child was brought to the hospital and the presiding physician was unable to rule in or out abuse. According to information found in the statewide child welfare information system (CWIS), the report was determined to be accidental and therefore invalid.

LCCYS received another report on 03/23/2015 with concerns regarding poor housing conditions and inadequate housekeeping. The family was being evicted as a result of the condition of the rental unit. The home reportedly had no heat over the winter as the parents did not have the gas turned on. There were also reports of possible substance abuse by the mother but no specific allegations were noted by the referral source. This report was determined to be invalid on 03/29/2015.

On 10/15/2015, a report was registered in Lackawanna County for serious physical neglect of the child. The report was regarding the same situation assessed on 02/04/2015 concerning the burns the child sustained [REDACTED]. These allegations were deemed as already investigated by the LCCYS and the report was invalidated on 12/07/2015.

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

On 10/15/2015, the mother and maternal grandmother brought the child to the Evangelical Community Hospital emergency room with concern that the child took the mother's [REDACTED] medication. The mother reported that she had cut one of her [REDACTED] in half and put the remainder in her purse. The mother reported to hospital staff that she had told the child not to get into her purse. The mother later found the child in her purse, with [REDACTED] in her hand. The mother noticed that the child was spitting like it was in her mouth. Mother immediately took the child to the hospital. The child was reported to be very lethargic however the child's [REDACTED] were stable. The attending physician [REDACTED] as needed however the child was not given [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] were stable. The child was monitored at Evangelical Hospital and transported to Geisinger Medical Center for continued monitoring.

The agency responded to the hospital on the same day and met with the mother. She confirmed that prior to the incident, the [REDACTED] medication was opened with [REDACTED] remaining. The medication was in a zippered pouch that was inside her purse. The medication was not in a child proof container. The child was found playing in the mother's purse and had the [REDACTED] in her hand. The child was spitting like something was in her mouth and saying "yucky." The

mother asked the child if she took the medication and took her to the hospital as she was uncertain if it was ingested or not. The maternal grandparents also live in the home and agreed to provide supervision of the mother and the other minor children in the home during the investigation. The mother agreed to keep all medications, secure, locked and out of reach of the children. The siblings were observed in the home on 10/16/2015. The mother and both maternal grandparents were present. No health or safety concerns were noted at the home. On 10/16/2015, the attending physician sent a statement to NCCY stating that although the situation was serious due to the nature of the potential ingestion of a medication, the child was in stable condition [REDACTED] during her observation at the hospital. NCCY submitted a request to have the report decertified as a near fatality. The request was later denied by the statewide near fatality review team as the physician labeled the child's condition as serious.

The child was released from the hospital on 10/16/2015 and returned to the home with the mother and maternal grandparents. The parents were educated on medication storage and general safety and supervision of young children. Weekly visits occurred to monitor compliance with safety measures put in place. Medication was observed to be in a locked storage box and the mother did not carry medication in her purse. No other concerns were noted with the family.

The case was opened for services on 11/02/2015 and a Family Service Plan was developed with the family with goals that include child safety and cooperation with the agency. The report was deemed accidental and the outcome was deemed unsubstantiated on 11/05/2015. No criminal charges were filed regarding this matter.

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

The County did not convene a near fatality review team meeting as a determination was made within 30 days of the initial report.

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

The County did not submit a report, as a near fatality meeting was not held.

**Department of Human Services Findings:**

- County Strengths:
  - NCCY scheduled a near fatality review team meeting in effort to gather all team members if review was needed. The meeting was cancelled when they reached a determination.
  
- County Weaknesses: and
  - NCCY did not make contact with LCCYS to obtain any details regarding prior case involvement, but relied only on information obtained in CWIS.

- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency.

No areas of non-compliance were noted.

**Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

- NCCY is encouraged to obtain case history from previously involved counties in effort to obtain a comprehensive perspective of the family being assessed.