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| Summary Report | Fatality | 6/19/19 |
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1. Victim: Johnathon Horton Jr. 20-month-old male

2. Was the child residing in the child's home or in an out-of-home placement at the time of the fatality?

The child was residing in his home when the following incident occurred:

On January 6, 2018 the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding 20-month-old Johnathon Horton Jr. who had been transported to a hospital and pronounced deceased. The Maricopa County Office of the Medical Examiner later determined the cause of death to be acute methadone toxicity from the ingestion of methadone. On February 12, 2019, the Maricopa County Juvenile Court found through a dependency proceeding that the child's parents, Christina Burdette and Johnathon Horton, failed to provide him with appropriate supervision which created an unsafe home and unreasonable risk of harm wherein he was found deceased in the home.

3. If the victim in the Preliminary Report involved a child residing in the child's home, the following information will be provided:

a. Services being provided to the child, a member of the child's family or the person suspected of the abuse or neglect at the time of the incident and the date of the last contact before the incident between the entity providing services and the person receiving services:

No services were being provided to the family by the Department of Child Safety at the time of the incident.

b. Was the child, a member of the child's family or the person suspected of the abuse or neglect the subject of a report for investigation at the time of the incident?

No.

c. All involvement of the child's parents and of the person suspected of the abuse or neglect in a situation for which a report for investigation was made or in services provided pursuant to this chapter in the five years preceding the incident:

The child's parents, Christina Burdette and Johnathon Horton, were involved in the following reports in the five years preceding the fatality:

On August 23, 2013, the Department received a report alleging neglect to a child by Christina Burdette. An investigation was initiated and the case was open when additional reports were received. The allegations were later unsubstantiated.

On April 16, 2014, the Department received a report alleging neglect to a child by Christina Burdette. The allegation was unsubstantiated.

On February 11, 2015, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by Christina Burdette and Johnathon Horton. The allegations were unsubstantiated.



On May 10, 2015, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by Johnathon Horton. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed after the family completed services provided by the Department.

d. Any investigation pursuant to a report for investigation concerning the child, a member of the child's family or the person suspected of the abuse or neglect or services provided to the child or the child's family since the date of the incident involving the fatality:

The investigation of the fatality report resulted in the Department taking custody of the victim's siblings and filing a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. The Department is providing services to support the family.

The investigation also resulted in a separate report regarding another child who resided in the home. That child was placed into foster care and the Department filed a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court.

Since the fatality report, DCS has received the following subsequent reports:

On May 4, 2018, a report was received alleging sexual abuse to a half-sibling by that child's father. The allegation was investigated and unsubstantiated.

On May 17, 2018, a report was received alleging neglect to a half-sibling by that child's father and another adult. The allegations were investigated and unsubstantiated.

On May 29, 2018, a report was received alleging neglect to a half-sibling by that child's father and another adult. There was also an allegation of physical abuse to the child by the other adult. All allegations were investigated and unsubstantiated.

On June 4, 2018, a report was received alleging neglect to a half-sibling by that child's father. The allegation was investigated and unsubstantiated.

On August 10, 2018, a report was received alleging neglect to a half-sibling by that child's father and another adult. The allegations were investigated and unsubstantiated.

On November 20, 2018, a report was received alleging neglect to a half-sibling by the mother, Christina Burdette, and the child's father. The allegations were investigated and substantiated as to the mother.

4. If the victim in the Preliminary Report involved a child residing in an out-of-home placement, the following information will be provided:

a. Licensing Agency:

N/A

b. Licensing history of the out-of-home placement, including the type of license held by the operator of the placement and the period for which the placement has been licensed:

N/A

c. Summary of all violations by the licensee:

N/A



d. Any other actions by the licensee or an employee of the licensee that constitute a substantial failure to protect and promote the health, safety and welfare of a child.

N/A

5. Actions taken by the Department in response to the case including any changes to policy or practice and/or recommendations for further changes in policies, practices, rules or statutes:

The Department conducted a joint investigation with the Phoenix Police Department. The investigation of the fatality report resulted in the Department taking custody of the victim's siblings and filing a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. The Department is providing services to support the family.

The investigation also resulted in a separate report regarding another child who resided in the home. That child was placed into foster care and the Department filed a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court.

Since the fatality, the Department has received six subsequent report involving a half-sibling. All allegations have been investigated and unsubstantiated with the exception of the November 20, 2018 report which was substantiated as to the mother, Christina Burdette, and the child's father.

Additionally, in accordance with the DCS Strategic Plan for State Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16), multidisciplinary team (MDT) reviews of fatality and near fatality cases were implemented during the first quarter of FY16. The MDT reviews of fatality and near fatality cases, especially those with prior DCS involvement, are a key feature of the Strategic Plan and support the objective of increasing the accuracy of safety and risk assessments in investigations.

Cases are reviewed by the MDT in order to identify any systemic factors, both internal and external to the Department that may have had an impact. The Department uses the aggregate data gathered through all of the MDT reviews to assess and guide future changes and/or recommendations to policies, practices, rules or statutes. Findings from these reviews are compiled into an annual report to be shared on the DCS website. The target date for release of the next report is December 1, 2019.

For more information regarding the Department of Child Safety's Strategic Plan for State Fiscal Year 2016, please visit the DCS website.