



Summary Report	Near Fatality	04/11/18
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1. Victim: 8 year old - female

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

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

On December 11, 2017, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding an 8-year-old girl who was found unresponsive at home. The report indicated that the child had been ill for the past two days and the mother, Serina Hernandez, had given the child a mixture of cough syrup and methadone. The child was admitted to the hospital in critical condition and it was determined that the methadone caused her to experience respiratory failure. On December 13, 2017 Serina Hernandez was charged with felony child abuse.

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:

Although no services were being provided to the family prior to the December 11, 2017 near fatality incident, the family was being investigated for an open report dated November 20, 2017. The last date of contact between the Department and the family was on November 29, 2017.

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?

The near fatality victim, the stepfather and the mother, Serina Hernandez, were subjects of the November 20, 2017 report.

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 mother, Serina Hernandez, was involved in the following prior reports:

On October 16, 2015, a report was received alleging neglect to a sibling of the near fatality victim by Serina Hernandez. The allegation was substantiated and the case was closed. The mother was encouraged to continue participating with services already in place.

On November 20, 2017, a report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim by her stepfather and Serina Hernandez. An investigation was initiated and still in progress when the near fatality incident occurred. The allegations were later unsubstantiated.

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 near fatality:



A subsequent report involving the mother, stepfather, the near fatality and siblings was received on December 28, 2017, regarding allegations of neglect that occurred prior to the children coming into care. The allegations were unsubstantiated.

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 child's mother, Serina Hernandez, was arrested and charged with child abuse. The Department removed the siblings from the home and filed a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. Upon release from the hospital, the near fatality victim was also placed in out-of-home care. A subsequent report involving the mother, stepfather, the near fatality and siblings was received on December 28, 2017, regarding allegations of neglect that occurred prior to the children coming into care. The allegations were unsubstantiated. Services are being provided by the Department.

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.

This case was 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 is using 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 will be compiled into an annual report to be shared on the DCS website. The target date for release of this report is December 1, 2018.

For more information regarding the Department of Child Safety's Strategic Plan for State Fiscal Year 2016, please visit the DCS website at: <https://dcs.az.gov/news/dcs-strategic-plan>.



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