

Summary Report	Near Fatality	05/21/2024
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1. Victim: 4-month-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 January 15, 2024, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding a 4-month-old female child who was found in the home to be severely malnourished. Upon examination, the child was determined to be in critical condition with hypothermia and low blood sugar levels. The child is diagnosed with Moebius syndrome. On January 18, 2024, a dependency petition was filed with Maricopa County Juvenile Court. On February 23, 2024, the court found the mother, Valerie Pizano, neglected the near fatality victim.

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:

There were no services 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 mother, Valerie Pizano, was involved in the following prior reports:

On November 17, 2017, a report was received alleging neglect toward children by the mother, Valerie Pizano, and their father. The allegations were substantiated. On November 22, 2017, an out of home dependency petition was filed with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. On September 6, 2018, the dependency petition was dismissed and the children were returned to their mother, Valerie Pizano.

On March 23, 2022, a report was received alleging neglect toward a child by the mother, Valerie Pizano. The allegation was unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed on June 8, 2022.

On December 22, 2022, a report was received alleging neglect and physical abuse to a child by the mother, Valerie Pizano, and their father. On December 29, 2022, an out of home dependency petition was filed with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. An in-home safety plan was later implemented with responsible adults. On July 5, 2023, the dependency petition was dismissed.

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:

The investigation of the near fatality report resulted in the other child in the home being placed in licensed foster care. Upon release from the hospital, the near fatality victim was placed in a licensed DDD foster home. The Department is providing services to the family. On January 18, 2024, a dependency petition was filed with Maricopa County Juvenile Court. On February 23, 2024, the court found the mother, Valerie Pizano, neglected the near fatality victim.

A subsequent report involving the near fatality victim was received on April 20, 2024. The investigation is ongoing.

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 Glendale Police Department. Upon release from the hospital, the near fatality victim was placed in a licensed DDD foster home. The other child in the home was placed in licensed foster care. The Department is providing services to the family. On January 18, 2024, a dependency petition was filed with Maricopa County Juvenile Court. On February 23, 2024, the court found the mother, Valerie Pizano, neglected the near fatality victim. A subsequent report involving the near fatality victim was received on April 20, 2024. The investigation is ongoing.

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 fatality and near fatality cases with prior DCS involvement, which are a key feature of the Strategic Plan and supports 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, 2024.