



Summary Report	Fatality	1/7/16
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1. Victim: Angel Rodriguez – 19-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 September 25, 2014, the Department of Child Safety received a report stating that 19-month-old Angel Rodriguez had been admitted to the hospital and was on life support. Angel was observed to have bruising to his face and torso and was later diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury. An investigation determined he had been home in the care of George Hernandez who was arrested and charged with child abuse. On September 26, 2014, Angel died from his injuries. On May 19, 2015, it was determined that Angel's mother, Desiree Rodriguez, failed to protect Angel by leaving him in the care of George Hernandez.

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:

There was no prior DCS involvement with George Hernandez. The child's mother, Desiree Hernandez, and his father were involved in the following:

On March 26, 2013, a report was received alleging neglect to Angel Rodriguez by his father and his mother, Desiree Rodriguez. The report stated that Angel had been hospitalized since birth due to a congenital heart defect. There were concerns regarding the parent's ability to care for him once released from the hospital. Angel was placed in a foster home certified to care for medically fragile children and a dependency case was filed with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. Ms. Rodriguez successfully completed services in order to help her care for Angel and he was returned to her care. The dependency case was dismissed September 2, 2014 and the DCS case was closed September 15, 2014.

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 mother's boyfriend, George Hernandez, being arrested and charged with first degree murder and child abuse. The Department determined that the child's mother, Desiree Rodriguez, failed to protect Angel by leaving him in the care of George Hernandez. The allegations pertaining to each of them were substantiated. The other child in the home was placed in foster care and the Department filed a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. Services were provided to the family and no subsequent reports of abuse or neglect have been received.

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. George Hernandez was arrested and charged with child abuse and first degree murder. The Department also determined that the child's mother, Desiree Rodriguez, failed to protect Angel from abuse by leaving him in the care of George Hernandez. The Department removed a sibling from the home and filed a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. Services were provided to the family by the Department.

On February 24, 2015, an administrative directive was sent to all DCS staff to conduct criminal background checks and a public records search on all adults living in or having access to the home within ten days prior to the return of a child.

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



Arizona Department of Child Safety

Douglas A. Ducey
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Director

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 September 1, 2016.

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>