



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

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REPORT ON THE DEATH OF

Amare Thomas

DOB: 5/3/2008

DOD: 3/4/2009

**The Family was known to
Dauphin County Children and Youth Services**

REPORT FINALIZED: 02/05/09

This report is confidential under the provisions of the Child Protective Services Law and cannot be released.

(23 Pa. C.S. Section 6340)

Unauthorized release is prohibited under penalty of law.

(23 Pa. C.S. 6349 (b))

Reason for Review:

Senate Bill No. 1147, now known as Act 33 was signed by Governor Rendell on July 3, 2008 and went into effect 180 days from that date, December 30, 2008. This Act amends the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) and sets standards for reviewing and reporting child fatality and near child fatalities that were suspected to have occurred due to child abuse. DPW must conduct child fatality and near fatality reviews and provide a written report on any child fatality or near fatality where child abuse is suspected.

Family Constellation:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
Amare Thomas	Victim Child	5/3/08
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1988
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED] 1985
[REDACTED]	Brother	[REDACTED] 2002
[REDACTED]	Brother	[REDACTED] 2005
[REDACTED]	Brother	[REDACTED] 2007

Notification of Fatality:

[REDACTED]. The child had been admitted to Hershey Medical Center on 1/31/09 with [REDACTED]. Dauphin County Children & Youth Services investigated the report [REDACTED]. On 3/4/09, Dauphin County Children and Youth Services were notified that Amare had died. [REDACTED]. The cause of death on the coroner's report was bronchial pneumonia.

Documents Reviewed and Individuals Interviewed:

Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families interviewed both the [REDACTED] intake caseworker assigned to the investigation and the intake supervisor of Dauphin County Children & Youth Services and reviewed the case documents, medical records, coroner's report and case notes.

Case Chronology:

Previous CY involvement:

- On November 20, 2008 Dauphin County Children & Youth Services received a [REDACTED] report [REDACTED]. The case was closed on January 16, 2009. No services were provided to the family.

- On February 2, 2009, Dauphin County Children & Youth Services received a [REDACTED] regarding Amare Thomas. According to the report, Amare was admitted to Hershey Medical Center from Harrisburg Hospital with the child in [REDACTED] along with [REDACTED], the remaining siblings in the home were placed in kinship care with approved relatives on 2/4/09 and the family was opened for [REDACTED] services within the agency. The investigation resulted in [REDACTED] medical documentation that the [REDACTED] were due to trauma during resuscitation attempts and not abuse.
- On 3/23/09, Dauphin County Children & Youth Services received 2 [REDACTED] reports [REDACTED]

Circumstances of Child's Fatality:

On 1/31/09 [REDACTED], mother of Amare Thomas stated to investigators that she fed Amare Thomas and both she and Amare went to sleep in her bed. Mother woke to hear Amare choking and wheezing. Mother took Amare to a nearby relative's home and called 911. According to mother the emergency response team did not respond in a timely manner so the family took the child to Harrisburg Hospital located a few blocks away. Child was transferred to Hershey Medical Center on the same day as Harrisburg Hospital was not equipped to meet the child's medical needs. Amare was diagnosed after his arrival at Hershey Medical Center with [REDACTED]. Child remained in hospital care [REDACTED] until his death on 3/4/09.

Current / most recent status of case:

- During the investigation of [REDACTED] Amare Thomas the agency placed all remaining children in the household on 2/4/09. The children were placed in kinship care with agency approved relatives and the family was opened for services within the agency. [REDACTED] New allegations [REDACTED] regarding Amare's brother were investigated on 3/23/09 by Dauphin County Children & Youth. [REDACTED]
- Criminal charges are still pending for mother and paramour
- The criminal investigation was closed in October 2009. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], the mother is allowed supervised contact with her children.

Services to children and families:

The children continue to remain in a Kinship Foster Care placement setting. Dauphin County Children & Youth Services continue to provide [REDACTED] services for the children.

Mother is receiving Family Reunification Services through Keystone Children and Family Services. The referral was made August 13, 2009 and she was opened for services on 9/2/09. They have been working with mother on parenting, discipline, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The goal is reunification for all the children.

[REDACTED] The mother and father must have supervised contact with the children at all times. The father has not been involved with the Agency until this point. He was evasive with the caseworker's attempts to contact him via a home visit at his mother's house on 5/12/09. The mother reported that he was not living with her, they were separated and he was living with his mother. Since mother's report of separation, he and she were married on December 30, 2009. He will be incorporated into the reunification plan and Family Reunification Services at this point.

The other two siblings remain with maternal grandmother in York; unsupervised visits have begun with mother. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The family was also referred to the YWCA for visitation but this has ceased.

County Strengths and Deficiencies as identified by the County's Near Fatality Report:

County Recommendations for changes at the Local Levels as identified by Fatality Report:

None for the report since it was determined that Amare Thomas died as a result of natural causes.

Recommendations for changes at the State Level:

Central Region Findings:

[REDACTED] Dauphin County Children & Youth Services conducted appropriate investigations and filed a [REDACTED] report within the mandated response time [REDACTED]

- The agency had direct contact with the children
- The agency assessed and assured safety of all the children
- The agency provided services as needed for the family

Statutory and Regulatory Compliance issues:

- A safety assessment was completed on 2/6/09. The children were placed with family members during the investigation. Mother and father would have no unsupervised contact with the children during the investigation
- Timeliness of Investigation- The agency completed their investigation in a timely manner within the time period 60 days mandated by the CPSL as the agency

received the [REDACTED] report on 2/2/09 and completed their investigation on 4/2/09.

- [REDACTED]
- A Risk Assessment was completed on 4/2/09 with Overall Severity as moderate due to nature of the injuries and lack of consensus medical opinion whether or not the injuries were caused by resuscitation or an abusive act. The Overall Risk was determined to be moderate/high due to the surviving children being placed with emergency caretaker's, Amare's death and lack of medical opinion consensus as to the nature of the [REDACTED]. These factors elevated the risk.
 - The family was accepted for services on 2/6/09 and remain open.
[REDACTED] The other two siblings were referred for day care services, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - Other than attending all court hearings, agency meetings and [REDACTED], there are no services that the father must complete. Father and Mother were married on December 30, 2009. He will be incorporated into the reunification plan and Family Reunification Services at this point.