

Presenters will be requested to obtain and send the following materials:

- a. all medical records pertaining to the incident under investigation and all background medical data possessed on the victim;
- b. all investigative reports, interviews, polygraphic examinations and other reports possessed by law enforcement;
- c. all autopsy reports, death certificate, and any and all scientific reports which have been prepared;
- d. copies of photographs of the crime scene, the victim, autopsy and other relevant photographic material. X-rays and videos may be brought to the meeting; and
- e. a brief narrative summary statement which describes the suspected crimes, investigative steps taken as of the date of the preparation of the statement and a description of the issue(s) or questions you wish the Board to address.

How a Case is Presented to the Board

The Board requests that each team of presenters include the prosecuting attorney, the investigating officer and the children and youth caseworker assigned to the case. In cases involving the death of a child, the examining pathologist is also invited to attend.

A member of the team, usually the prosecuting attorney or lead investigator, will be requested to provide a brief synopsis of the case to the Board at the beginning of the discussion and to indicate to the Board any specific questions the team would like to have answered or the direction it is seeking.

The review is informal and consists of a discussion of the evidence presented and its significance. In order to ensure complete confidentiality of all case materials and discussions, no minutes are taken of the meetings and no written report, opinion or conclusion is issued from the Board. Where appropriate, presenters may find it desirable to request such reports from individual experts.

Q u e s t i o n s ?

For more information about the Attorney General's Medical Legal/Advisory Board on Child Abuse, please contact Senior Deputy Attorney General Janice Martino-Gottshall or Barbara Hoffman, Executive Secretary to the Board, at (717) 783-6333.

The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Medical/Legal Advisory Board on Child Abuse



*Attorney General
Tom Corbett*

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The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Medical/Legal Advisory Board on Child Abuse is a body of approximately 50 child abuse experts who meet bimonthly to provide professional consultation to the prosecution, law enforcement and child protective services communities. Created in 1988 as a resource for Pennsylvania's child abuse investigators and prosecutors, the Attorney General's Medical/Legal Advisory Board on Child Abuse has since reviewed over 100 cases involving child homicide, physical and sexual abuse, and neglect. The Board's membership includes Pennsylvania's premier medical experts specializing in such areas as forensic pathology, pediatric medicine, pediatric neuroradiology, neuropathology and pediatric psychiatry. Rounding out the expertise of the Board are district attorneys, investigators, representatives from state and local child protective services agencies and experts from other related disciplines. Members of the Board, all of whom have distinguished themselves by their commitment to combating child abuse, are appointed to serve by Attorney General Tom Corbett.

The Board functions as a consulting and advisory body in cases of child homicide, abuse (both physical and sexual) and neglect which are under investigation by a child protective service agency or law enforcement agency, or which are being prosecuted. The Board's expertise is particularly useful in cases where the evidence appears to be inconclusive or contradictory, or where the significance of medical or scientific evidence is either not known or is unclear. The Board also assists investigators and prosecutors in further de-

fining the goals of an investigation, preparing to prove a case at trial and preparing to meet defenses which are likely to be raised in the prosecution of a case.

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Examples of Cases Reviewed by the Board

Examples of topics and questions posed to the Board include:

- whether a particular injury can be determined to have occurred within a specific period of time;
- whether an injury is a result of abuse or could have been accidentally sustained;
- whether an injury could have been sustained in the manner described by the suspect(s);
- whether an injury can be explained by a pre-existing medical condition;
- how an injury might have been caused or sustained;
- what key questions should be asked of suspects and witnesses in the course of an investigation; and
- whether existing evidence is sufficient for prosecution, and if not, how further evidence should be gathered.

How to Request a Case Review by the Board

Cases are presented to the Board upon request of the investigating officer, the prosecutor or the Children and Youth Services caseworker. To request a review by the Board, contact Senior Deputy Attorney General Janice Martino-Gottshall or Barbara Hoffman, Executive Secretary to the Board, at (717) 783-6333, with a brief description of the case and reasons for requesting the review. In scheduling case reviews, consideration is given to the urgency of a request, the amount of time it will take for the requesting team to obtain and forward all necessary materials in advance of the review and the availability of time.

Materials Required from Presenters to the Board

All materials relevant to each case are compiled and forwarded to Board members at least 10 days prior to the scheduled review. Therefore, once a case is scheduled to be heard by the Board, the following materials must be received from the presenter 30 days in advance of the meeting date so that these materials can be compiled, photocopied, bound and mailed to the members of the Board. It is important that the materials be as complete as possible to ensure that the Board has all available information. Incomplete information may result in an incomplete resolution of issues addressed by the Board.

