

30-Day CIRT REVIEW REPORT*

I. Introduction

Oregon Department of Human Services adopted the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) protocol on November 1, 2004. This protocol was developed for the following purposes:

- To specify the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare procedures that will be used when a critical incident occurs;
- To increase the Department's accountability to the public;
- To ensure timely responses by the Department with respect to any critical incident in Child Welfare; and
- To increase the Department's ability to recommend necessary changes to statutes, administrative rules, policies and procedures, practices, training and personnel matters.

The following is a 30-day report as required by the protocol, which includes initial findings, preliminary recommendations and next steps. During the next 30-day period, DHS will continue a comprehensive review of these preliminary findings and assess the degree to which these findings have statewide implications. The CIRT team will then assign specific tasks, identify time frames and desired outcomes.

II. CIRT Reason:

On January 14, 2005, three-month-old Jewell Newland died at OHSU of abdominal injuries. On January 15, 2005, James Newland, Jewell's father, was arrested and charged with manslaughter 1, criminal mistreatment 1, third-degree assault, escape, and resisting arrest.

III. CIRT Response and Case Status Update:

a. Criminal Investigation and CPS Assessment:

The criminal investigation is continuing and DHS continues to work with Monmouth Police Department and the Polk County District Attorney's Office in the completion of the CPS assessment.

c. Media Response:

Polk County DA is taking the lead in media response and Patricia Feeny has been designated to respond from DHS.

** There has been a delay in the finalization of the 30-day report due to coordination with the criminal investigation.*

IV. CIRT Review Process:

a. Case Review Process:

CAF program staff reviewed and evaluated all case record information, including documents related to the current assessment and all previous contact and service provision to these family members. Areas of focus for this review were compliance with policy in screening and assessment and thorough review of the case history and the impact of the family history on current safety concerns.

b. Staff Interview Process:

Scheduling of staff interviews is under way. These interviews were initially delayed at the request of the DA's office. DHS has now received the DA's concurrence to proceed with the interviews.

V. Initial Findings and Preliminary Recommendations:

1. Finding: The case history included information about a variety of issues, including physical abuse and domestic violence. There is no documentation that case history was considered in determining current safety threats at screening and assessment.

Recommendations:

- FACIS, the online child welfare information system, should be used as an investigative tool to assess previous child protective services history of parents and alleged perpetrators. CAF program staff will work with the local Service Delivery Area (SDA) 3 screeners and child protective service workers to ensure there is adequate training and support in how to cross reference cases in FACIS and access all information that is available in the child welfare system in making safety decisions.
- SDA 3 screening and CPS supervisors must ensure that screeners and assessment workers complete a thorough review of case history. Administrative rule requires a review of case history in making screening decisions and at key points of safety decision-making in the assessment and case planning process.

2. Finding: Review of the information available indicated that consultation from a medical professional specializing in child abuse assessment would have provided valuable information as decisions were made.

Recommendation:

- With the assistance of a medical expert in child abuse, DHS will refine current policy and practice for obtaining medical consultations in child abuse cases.
- CAF will request that the Polk County Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) review the events of this case to evaluate the need for education in the community about medical identification of child abuse and to determine the need for training about child abuse reporting requirements.

VI. Next Steps:

- Interviews by DHS administrative staff will occur in the next 30 days.