

Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) Initial Report R.F.N.

February 24, 2014

Note: The delay in posting this initial report is due to Agency efforts to secure access to confidential information needed for determination of potential systemic issues.

Executive Summary

On December 11, 2013, the Department of Human Services (DHS) was notified that an infant, R.F.N., was found deceased and the cause of death was under investigation. DHS had received two previous child abuse reports concerning this child within the past year.

On December 12, 2013, DHS Director Erinn Kelly-Siel declared a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) be convened. This is a Mandatory CIRT pursuant to Oregon Revised Statute 419B.024. This is the initial report of the CIRT and is issued as an activity report and status update.

Summary of Reported Incident and Background

On 09/19/2013, Oregon DHS received a child abuse report that R.F.N.'s parents were under investigation by Child Protective Services (CPS) in another state. They were believed to have fled from the investigation and to be living with extended family in Oregon.

The report to Oregon DHS was assigned to a CPS worker as an Immediate Response. The worker attempted to locate the family at the address provided but the owners of the home denied having any knowledge of the family's whereabouts. Additional efforts to locate the family were made to no avail, and the assessment was eventually closed with an "Unable to Locate" disposition.

On 10/29/2013, Oregon DHS received a second child abuse report regarding the family. The report indicated a possible new address, and the report was once again assigned to a CPS worker as an Immediate Response. The CPS worker made at least four unsuccessful attempts to contact the family, and the assessment was eventually closed with an "Unable to Locate" disposition.

On 12/11/13, Oregon DHS received a third child abuse report from local law enforcement that R.F.N. was found deceased, and the cause of death was under investigation. The CPS assessment was initiated as a result of this report, and the criminal investigation continues as of the date of this initial report.

CIRT Activity Report and Status Update

Pursuant to CIRT protocol, the CIRT team has met twice regarding this case. At the first meeting, the team reviewed preliminary information and identified issues of interest in the case. A file review was conducted, and the results were presented at the second meeting.

At that time, the team identified as a potential systemic issue the communication between different programs within DHS when one program is attempting to locate an individual or family, and another program is or might be contacted by that individual or family. The team is awaiting further information to inform the decision about systemic issues and plans to address those issues.

Purpose of Critical Incident Response Team Reports

CIRT reports are to be used as tools for determining whether there are systemic issues which need to be addressed when there are incidents of serious injury or death involving a child who has had contact with DHS. The reviews are launched by the Department Director to quickly analyze DHS actions in relation to each child.

Results of the reviews are posted on the DHS website. Actions are implemented based on the recommendations of the CIRT team. The ultimate purpose is to review department practices and recommend improvements, if any.