

Child Fatality Review #08-43
Region 3
Whatcom County

This four-month-old Caucasian female died from Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID).

Case Overview

On August 8, 2008, the grandmother of the deceased child found her lying face down with no pulse and no apparent injury. The grandmother performed CPR until paramedics arrived. The child had no pulse or respiration on arrival at the hospital emergency room. The Whatcom County Medical Examiner's autopsy report lists the cause of death as, "Sudden Unexplained Infant Death" and the manner as "undetermined."

The mother of the deceased child has three surviving children, all older than the deceased child. Children's Administration had no knowledge of the family prior to the one CPS referral in January 2008. The allegations in this referral did not rise to the level of abuse and did not screen in for investigation.

Child Protective Services intake became aware of the death of this infant through a newspaper obituary. The local hospital was contacted for additional information. The other children in the family had breathing issues and the deceased child was hospitalized at age one month for choking difficulties. The exact cause of death was unknown. Medical personnel did not suspect child abuse/neglect of the children in this family.

Referral History

On January 8, 2008, an anonymous referrer reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) intake that the mother and children recently vacated a home in Whatcom County and when they left, the walls were covered in nicotine. The referrer also said the mother was seen slapping the children on the head. This referral was screened as information only.

Issues and Recommendations

Issue: None identified

Recommendation: None