

Child Fatality Review #08-57
Region 3
Skagit County

This 17-year-old African-American male died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Case Overview

On November 24, 2008, the deceased youth was visiting his brother's home in Pierce County. The youth was away from the home while his brother and his wife were at work. They returned later in the day and found the youth dead inside their home. He had gotten back into their locked residence and shot himself with the brother's rifle.

The youth's family was involved with Mt. Vernon Child Protective Services (CPS) with a case closing two weeks prior to the fatality incident. CPS investigated allegations that the mother inappropriately responded to the deceased youth taking a lethal dose of Tylenol. She drove her son almost 100 miles to a hospital near the family home rather than taking him to the nearest hospital. He told a social worker he was not depressed or suicidal. He was offered, and declined, mental health counseling. He was instructed how to access counseling should he want it in the future.

Referral History

On April 10, 1995, a neighbor reported to CPS intake that the three children in the home, including the deceased youth, then five-years-old, were poorly supervised. The children, with ages ranging from five to ten-years-old, played a game of running onto a busy road and forcing cars to stop. The referrer reported the mother was aware her children played this game, but did nothing to stop it. It was also alleged there was domestic violence in the parents' relationship. This referral was screened in for investigation by CPS and closed with an inconclusive finding for negligent treatment or maltreatment.

On October 7, 2008, a relative reported to CPS intake that the deceased youth swallowed two bottles of Tylenol. The family was visiting relatives in Tacoma at that time. The mother took her son and left, presumably to take him to a nearby hospital. The referrer found out later the mother took him to a hospital near their home two hours away. The referrer added the mother left the nine-year-old brother home alone while she worked late. This referral was screened in for investigation by CPS and closed with an unfounded finding.

On January 22, 2009, CPS intake was alerted to the death of this youth. The youth died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound on November 24, 2008 in Pierce County while visiting his adult brother. This referral was screened out for investigation.

Issues and Recommendations

Issue: No issues identified

Recommendation: None