

Child Fatality Review #09-19
Region 1
Okanogan County

This six-day-old Native American male died from undetermined causes.

Case Overview

On April 25, 2009, this infant's father fell asleep with his infant son on his chest while they co-slept on a couch. The father awoke and the infant was deceased with a mark on his forehead consistent with the seam on the couch. The county coroner reported the cause of death is undetermined while co-sleeping. The manner of death is undetermined. The child was seen by a doctor the day before his death and there were no concerns.

Children's Administration had no prior history on this family other than two intakes prior to this child's birth. Both intakes were called to Child Protective Services (CPS) intake during the mother's pregnancy.

Referral History

On November 17, 2008, staff at a medical clinic called CPS intake to report the deceased child's mother was 16 weeks pregnant and tested positive for methamphetamine and marijuana. There were no other children in her care. The intake was screened as Information Only.

On December 24, 2008, a social worker reported that the child's mother admitted to smoking marijuana for the first four months of her pregnancy. She said she quit using marijuana but was taking Suboxen for treatment of her pain medication addiction. The intake was screened as Information Only.

On April 28, 2009, a social worker reported to CPS intake that this infant died suddenly on April 25, 2009. The infant was seen by a doctor a day prior to his death and no concerns were raised. The intake was screened as Information Only.

Issues and Recommendations

Issue: Although the screening decisions for both intakes for this family were screened appropriately per the Prenatal Substance Abuse policy, there is no documentation of referrals made to the First Steps Program by the intake worker, which is directed in the Prenatal Policy.

Recommendation: Feedback about documenting referrals to First Steps per the policy was provided to the Intake worker and supervisor in the local office that screened the intakes.