

Child Fatality Review #09-22
Region 1
Stevens County

This 16-year-old Hispanic male died from positional asphyxiation.

Case Overview

On the evening of May 2, 2009, this 16-year-old youth was out with friends. He was drinking alcohol and slept in a vehicle parked in front of a residence, along with a friend. On the morning of May 3, 2009 he was found deceased in the vehicle. He had vomited in the car. The Stevens County Coroner reported the youth died of positional asphyxiation due to intoxication. His blood alcohol level was .34 at autopsy.

Referral History

On June 12, 2006 a DSHS employee reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) intake that the deceased youth's mother left her two-month-old infant and 11-year-old daughter in a vehicle with the motor running. The DSHS employee did not know how long the children were in the car. Upon investigation it was confirmed that the children were in the vehicle while the mother walked the deceased youth, then 14-years-old, into a health clinic. The investigation was closed with unfounded findings of neglect.

On April 14, 2008, the deceased youth's mother called CPS intake requesting Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) for the deceased youth, then 16-years-old, and her 12-year-old daughter. The deceased youth had refused to go to school and during an altercation with his mother he pushed her down leading to his arrest for assault. The deceased youth spent a night at a juvenile detention facility. The daughter was also missing school, and the mother sought assistance.

Due to the assault of his mother, the deceased youth was required to participate with the Juvenile Diversion program in Stevens County. He fulfilled the required 10 hours, eight of which was individual counseling and additional assessment time. He also completed a community service project and all involved believed that the deceased youth had reconciled his issues by the conclusion of his counseling sessions.

FRS services were offered to the family at the same time the deceased youth was participating in Diversion. The FRS social worker followed all requirements including the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs - Short Screener (GAIN-SS) for both teens and their mother. Phase two counseling began and after 1.5 hours of direct contact between the family and the FRS provider, the case was closed by mutual consent. The FRS case was closed in July 2008.

Issues and Recommendations

Issue: The review committee did not identify any issues or recommendations regarding this case.

Recommendation: None