Child Fatality Review #08-12
Region 2
Benton County

This one-month-old Hispanic female's death was attributed to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Case Overview

On April 3, 2008, this one-month-old Hispanic female was brought to a hospital in cardiac arrest. The mother told law enforcement she fell asleep with the infant on her lap and when her boyfriend woke up, he found the child face down on the floor not breathing. The deceased child's aunt and mother's boyfriend started CPR and called 911. Detectives reported there was probable cause the death resulted from possible neglect issues. In the Benton County Coroner autopsy report, it was reported the child was found on the floor after co-sleeping between her mother and the mother's boyfriend on a twin bed. The autopsy revealed no trauma, infection, or other apparent cause of death. It is not known how the child ended up on the floor. The coroner's report listed the cause and manner of death as undetermined. The coroner reported Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or overlay asphyxia were both reasonable possibilities.

Referral History

On October 13, 2007, staff at a doctor's officer reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) intake that the deceased child's mother was four months pregnant and admitted to ongoing methamphetamine use. It was unknown if she received pre-natal care. The mother was homeless at the time of this referral. CPS intake sent notices to area hospitals alerting them that the mother may arrive to deliver her child. The referral was screened as information only. The referral was screened as information only according to CA intake policy. A referral to a local First Steps agency was made by CA staff. This referral notified the First Steps agency that the mother was pregnant and possibly used illegal drugs and/or other controlled substances while pregnant.

On December 4, 2007, the deceased child's mother disclosed to a CA social worker that she was six months pregnant and over the past year used methamphetamine on an ongoing basis during her pregnancy. The mother admitted using methamphetamine on December 2, 2007. The mother said she received prenatal care through a private doctor and did not receive care or services through the Public Health Department. The referral was screened as information only according to CA intake policy and a referral to First Steps was made by CA staff.

On April 3, 2008, CPS intake received a report from law enforcement about the death of the deceased child. Law enforcement reported there was probable cause that the death may have resulted from neglect. The mother's boyfriend reported finding the baby on the bedroom floor. The baby was co-sleeping with the mother and her boyfriend. The coroner's reported the manner of death was undetermined and likely from SIDS or overlay asphyxia.

This referral was investigated by CPS and closed with an unfounded finding for negligent treatment or maltreatment.

Issues and Recommendations

Issue: None

Recommendation: None