Critical Incident Review Team
Final Report

A Critical Incident Review Team (CIRT) is convened by the Department Director when the Department becomes aware of a critical incident resulting in a child fatality that was reasonably believed to be the result of abuse and the child, child's sibling or another child living in the household with the child has had contact with the Department (ODHS). The reviews are called by the Department Director to quickly analyze ODHS actions in relation to the critical incident and to ensure the safety and well-being of all children within the custody of ODHS or during a child protective service assessment. The CIRT must complete a final report which serves to provide an overview of the critical incident relevant Department history and may include recommendations regarding actions that should be implemented to increase child safety. Reports must not contain any confidential information or records that may not be disclosed to members of the public. The CIRT report is created at a specific time as required by statute and does not account for events occurring after posting of the report. Versions of all final reports are posted on the ODHS website.

CIRT information

CIRT ID: DFDP8J0EKI

Date of critical incident: May 11, 2025

Date Department became aware of fatality: May 19, 2025

Date Department caused an investigation to be made: May 19, 2025

Date of CPS assessment disposition: July 15, 22025

Date CIRT assigned: May 23, 2025

Date Final Report submitted: Aug. 29, 2025

Date(s) of CIRT meeting(s): June 23, 2025; July 25, 2025

Number of participants: 18; 22

Members of the public? No; Yes

Critical incident description

Date of report: May 19, 2025; May 21, 2025

Assignment decision: 24 Hours

Allegation(s): Neglect by the mother

Disposition(s): Founded

ODHS received a report on May 19, 2025, alleging neglect to the child, who was 3 years old, by their mother. The reporter said that last week, the mother made a social media post where she shared that the child died on May 11, 2025, but provided no explanation as to how they died. The reporter stated that the child had significant medical needs; they required a g-tube for feeding and was partially blind, but their condition was not life-threatening.

The reporter stated that the family was involved in child welfare services in two different states recently and had previous involvement with ODHS. The most recent child welfare intervention was due to neglect in another state. The children were malnourished, the home environment was unsanitary, and the mother was using methamphetamine in front of the children. There were also concerns of domestic violence perpetrated by the father toward the mother. The children were in an out-of-home safety plan while the mother entered supportive services, and the children were returned to her care in October 2024. The family moved back to Oregon in early October 2024.

The Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) screener consulted with the local law enforcement agency (LEA), who did not have record of any matching deaths but indicated they would conduct a welfare check at the family's last known address. LEA personnel later communicated to the screener that they had gone to the address, but no one answered. Neighbors confirmed that the mother lived there and indicated that the child had died. The neighbors were told by the mother that the child was not expected to live past age 5. After several attempts to reach

the mother by phone, LEA officers were able contact her. She said that she was out of town and confirmed that the child had died, though she would not say how.

ODHS received a second report on May 21, 2025, alleging neglect to the siblings who were 14, 11, 7 and 4 years old by their mother. The report stated that LEA attempted to contact the family regarding the report from May 19, 2025. LEA arrived at the residence around 11:45 p.m. on May 20, 2025. The mother did not initially respond to officers but eventually allowed them into the home to search for evidence of the child's death. The residence was observed by LEA to be dirty and cluttered but had running water and electricity. The older children appeared healthy and appropriately groomed.

LEA officers discovered the child's remains wrapped in a blanket and inside a plastic storage bin in the living room. The mother told LEA that the child died on May 11, 2025; they had been unresponsive but were breathing, and the child died in her arms. The mother did not report the child's death for fear that LEA would believe she did something to them. The reporter said that the mother disclosed using drugs for the previous week and a half, but they did not know which substances she was using. During the LEA contact, the older children were left in the care of a relative, who agreed to transport the children to school and meet their needs. LEA did not interview the children but scheduled an appointment for them to be seen at the local Child Advocacy Center (CAC) on May 22, 2025.

The CPS caseworker met with a relative, whose residence was adjacent to the family home, on May 21, 2025. The relative said that she hadn't seen the family in an extended period of time prior to when the family returned to Oregon in November 2024. The relative knew that the family had been involved in child welfare services in another state and were homeless living in their vehicle upon returning to Oregon. The relative indicated that the family had been living in their adjacent property for about two months prior to the critical incident.

The relative last saw the child on May 7, 2025, and said it appeared that the child had lost weight since the time the family moved in. The mother told the relative that the child was terminally ill and was not expected to live past the age of 5. The child was blind, couldn't walk and had a feeding tube. The relative believed that the child received special food which the mother acquired from an online vendor.

The relative said that they learned of the child's death from a neighbor which they thought was odd, considering how close their homes were. The relative went over to the family home on

May 20, 2025. They reported that the home was unkempt and had a foul odor. When the relative asked about the child's whereabouts, the mother acknowledged that the child died, pointed to a plastic storage bin and told the relative that the child's remains were in it. The relative said that the mother was not emotionally distraught during this disclosure and confided suicidal ideations with the relative. The relative told the mother that they were going to check on the other children outside and instead stepped out to call 911.

The relative said the mother told them that she had relapsed on methamphetamine on May 14, 2025. Prior to visiting the mother on May 20, the relative didn't have concerns for current substance by the mother. The relative reported that the 14-year-old sibling was often left to care for the child for extended periods of time. The relative shared that one time, the mother left the child with the 14-year-old sibling while she took the other children on a trip for a period of at least four days. The relative said that from their observations, the 14-year-old sibling did most of the care for the child and had been left alone with them at least 10 times in the past two months. The relative told the caseworker that the mother had sent the 4-year-old sibling to live with their father in another state after the child's death because the 4-year-old sibling had a hard time understanding why the other family members were sad.

The CPS caseworker spoke to the mother at the local LEA department on May 21, 2025. The mother reported that the child died on May 11, 2025, due to their medical condition, which she stated was "pontocerebral hyplasia," a terminal condition in which children rarely live past the first year of life. The mother said that the child did not appear sick on May 11 but wanted to be held so the mother did so. While holding the child, they made a gurgling noise and died. The mother did not call 911 or perform CPR on the child. The mother said she placed the child into the storage bin in the families' sleeping area because she was scared.

The mother reported that the child was on a strict feeding schedule via g-tube supplemented by formula and baby food. The mother indicated that the child needed regular medical care follow-ups and said the child had last been seen by a medical provider in November 2024 while in the other state. There was no record of any follow ups made for the child's medical care in Oregon. The mother told the caseworker that she was a registered nurse (there was no record of this) and she was trained to use the child's feeding pump and used it until it broke. The mother said she changed the child's tubing every three months.

The mother confirmed that she, the 11-year-old sibling and 7-year-old sibling went on a trip for one day while the 14-year-old sibling stayed home with the child. She stated she trained the 14-year-old and 11-year-old siblings to care for the child but denied that she regularly left them to be primary caregivers to the child.

The mother reported that she used methamphetamine intravenously one time per day since the child's death. She said that she would use when the children were at school. The mother avoided follow-up questions about how the 14-year-old child was not enrolled in school.

The CPS caseworker made numerous attempts to have follow-up conversations with the mother, but they were unsuccessful in reaching her again. The children were placed in an out-of-home safety plan due to the safety concerns in their mother's care. The mother did not attend arranged family time with them after the critical incident.

The 14-year-old, 11-year-old and 7-year-old siblings had medical examinations at the local CAC on May 22, 2025. All of the children tested positive for methamphetamine and were given diagnoses of child maltreatment and exposure to environmental hazards. During the evaluation, the 14-year-old sibling denied caring for the child in any capacity.

The CPS caseworker spoke to the father of the child and 4-year-old sibling, who confirmed that the 4-year-old was in his physical custody and was working toward attaining full legal custody in another state. He last saw the child on Oct. 26, 2024. The father indicated that the mother called him on May 12, 2025, reporting the child died. She told him that the child was fussy and wanted to be held and that while holding them, they made a gurgling sound and died. The mother told the father that she called 911 and they came to pick up the remains.

The father told the caseworker that he received conflicting information about the child's medical condition, and he was unsure of what to believe. Child welfare services in another state told him that the child was not terminally ill. He indicated that the child was seen one to two times per month in the other state for vision, nutrition and physical therapy needs. He was surprised that the child had not been to medical appointments after returning to Oregon because the mother told him she had been attending medical appointments.

The father said he separated from the mother because she was abusive toward him. He cited one example of a video where the mother assaulted him while he was on community supervision, and his officer released him from supervision after viewing the video. He

acknowledged that the mother had an ongoing problem with methamphetamine use but was unaware of her current use. The father said that he would not trust the older children to care for the child. When he and the mother were together, he stated that the parents did all of the child's caretaking.

The CPS caseworker arranged for a courtesy home visit for the father and 4-year-old sibling in the other state. The father reaffirmed to the courtesy caseworker that he left the relationship with the mother due their volatile relationship. The father said he hadn't communicated with the mother and blocked her number. The father showed the courtesy caseworker that the phone number had been blocked after the mother sent him a text message that threatened his safety and wellbeing.

The father denied any alcohol consumption and drug use, with the exception of marijuana. The courtesy caseworker noted that the father did not exhibit behavioral indicators of methamphetamine use. There were no marijuana products or paraphernalia located in the home. The father said that the 4-year-old sibling was acclimating to the home well, but was struggling with sleep routine, which he believed was due to the time difference between Oregon and the state where he lived. The sibling was very hungry the first days in his home, which he expected because of the circumstances reported from the mother's home.

The courtesy caseworker in the other state spoke to the 4-year-old sibling during this contact. The sibling said that they got enough to eat and had no disclosures around safety concerns for the caretakers in this home. The sibling said that the child was in heaven because they didn't get enough food, and that it was the mother's responsibility to feed them. The sibling said that while in their mother's care, they would eat but it wasn't enough to fill up their belly. The sibling described the floor in the mother's home was hard because it had stuff all over it. All of the children and the mother would sleep on the floor, but that the 11-year-old sibling would sleep on a pile of laundry. The 4-year-old sibling described other adults coming into the home to hang out sometimes but didn't know what they did because the kids had to go to a different part of the home when they were over.

The CPS caseworker spoke via phone to the father of the 14-year-old and 11-year-old siblings, who was incarcerated. The father did not have much to contribute to the CPS assessment but acknowledged the need for safety planning for the children.

Records from LEA regarding the critical incident indicated that the home was unsanitary; there was garbage, feces and molded items throughout the home, the sink and toilet were clogged and there were exposed electrical wires and plumbing in the home. Additionally, methamphetamine was located in the mother's purse inside the residence.

The CPS caseworker attained medical records for the family. The last medical exam that the child had was on Jan. 19, 2024, while they were not in the mother's care due to child welfare involvement in the other state. There was no indication in any of the medical records that the child was terminally ill or that the child had the diagnosis that the mother reported to others. Records indicated that the child had a genetic mutation, but there was no clear significance on the impact from that mutation, which needed further testing. The child required special food via g-tube, oxygen, ongoing vision and physical therapies. There were concerns that the child had been exposed to substances while in utero.

Later medical records from the other state showed that the child did not meet criteria for autism. Follow up with genetic specialists did not believe that the child was impacted by a genetic condition. Ophthalmology specialists diagnosed the child with legal blindness due to damage of visual processing, but their eyes worked. Ophthalmology records theorized this could have been caused by being shaken as an infant.

The CPS caseworker spoke to the previous resource care provider in the other state, who was also employed in the medical field. The provider said that they were told that the children were placed in community resource care due to unsanitary living conditions, methamphetamine use by the mother, domestic violence concerns – perpetrated by the father toward the mother – and the children were malnourished. The resource provider said that the child's feeding pump was maintained by the 11-year-old sibling, was filled with mold and had to be thrown away.

The resource provider had the child and the 4-year-old sibling in their care initially, though the 4-year-old sibling moved to another placement so that the provider could meet the child's significant medical needs. The provider indicated that the child was 18 months old when they entered care; the child's head was completely flat, they had delays in all skills, did not smile and would not vocalize. Within three weeks, the child made progress in all areas related to their medical needs. The child learned to visually process and was using their eyes 80 percent of the time when they left resource care. When the return home plan was developed with the mother, the child needed to continue with feeding therapies, physical therapy and regular monthly

follow ups regarding their nutrition. There were no records indicating that the mother followed up on the child's medical needs when they returned to her care.

The CPS caseworker spoke to a relative who resided in the other state with the father as collateral. The relative disclosed concerns for the mother's methamphetamine use while caring for the children. The relative previously believed that the mother was meeting the child's medical needs because she had received a large tax return, which the mother told them was enough to cover rent for an entire year. The relative said that the 4-year-old sibling was skinnier than when they last saw them, about a year prior, but otherwise had no concerns for how the sibling was adjusting to the father's care. The relative said that she also had concerns for the condition of the mother's home; they had seen pictures of the home on social media, and it appeared unsanitary.

The CPS caseworker spoke to the 11-year-old sibling's former resource care provider in another state as collateral. They resource provider indicated that the mother allowed many questionable individuals around her children and had a history of methamphetamine use. The provider reported that the mother used crowdfunding services numerous times, including one time where she described caring for five children on her own, which was during a period where the children were not in her care. The provider said that the sibling needed glasses when they entered care, which was a need that the mother had not explored. The provider said that the 11-year-old sibling was reluctant to return to the mother's care and that the sibling told them it was not safe to do so. When the sibling entered care with the provider, the provider had difficulty establishing a hygiene routine with them and believed there was a void of hygiene practices for the children in the home with the mother.

The CPS caseworker spoke to the child's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and guardian ad litem from the other state. The CASA reported that the child made tremendous improvements while in resource care. They reported that the 11-year-old sibling had been acting as the child's caregiver despite being only 8 to 9 years old at the time. The CASA reported that the mother struggled with methamphetamine use and would frequently ask others for financial assistance. The mother was also said to rent out an air mattress in her living room and would essentially use it as a hotel for anyone who was willing to pay for it. The children disclosed that they felt unsafe and uncomfortable in their own residence due to this. The child's guardian ad litem added that this was the most severe case of neglect they had seen in their career.

The CPS caseworker spoke to another relative as collateral. The caseworker asked about concerns about the child being malnourished, to which she replied it sounded like the mother's parenting practices. The grandmother said that the mother should have been able to meet all of the child's nutritional needs because she had boasted about a large tax return. The relative said that they had only met the child once and could only hold them for a short time due to their foul odor. The relative described a white build-up on the child's neck that smelled bad, and it appeared like all of the children had been in the same clothes for several days. During their interactions with the child, she tried to clean them, which was challenging because it appeared that they had been unbathed for an extended period. The grandmother reported that the mother had a pattern of methamphetamine use and living in unsanitary conditions which were unsafe for children.

The CPS caseworker spoke to a family friend as collateral. The family friend reported that they knew the mother since they were teenagers and has had sporadic contact with her throughout the years. When the family returned to Oregon, the friend had spent time with the family a number of times. The friend did not report any concerns for substance use by the mother; however, they were not knowledgeable about indications of substance use.

The family friend reported concerns for the condition of the home. They reported that the counters were full of dirty dishes and there was no food stored in the home. On multiple occasions, the mother went over to the friend's home to do laundry and would bring dirty dishes so the mother could use their dishwasher. There were several occasions where the mother asked the friend for food to feed the children and one time where the 14-year-old sibling sent them a text message asking for food. The friend said that they continued their friendship with the mother because they felt bad for the children.

The last time the friend saw the children was on April 9, 2025. On that occasion, the friend drove the mother to another town to go to a store and the 14-year-old sibling was left at home with the child and the 4-year-old sibling. The friend reported that the 14-year-old sibling and 11-year-old sibling were the primary caregivers to the child. They reported that the family referred to the 11-year-old sibling as 'little parent' and that the 14-year-old sibling was a built-in babysitter. On another occasion in early April 2025, the friend went over to the mother's home, and they observed that the child was 'very sick' with a cough and runny nose. The friend expressed concern to the mother about this because of their medical condition and urged the mother to seek medical care but she refused.

The CPS caseworker had follow-up contact with the 14-year-old sibling at their community resource home on May 11, 2025. The sibling stated that they initially dealt with the child's death internally but has since started speaking with a counselor, which was helping. The sibling disclosed that they assisted with feeding the child frequently. The sibling believed that the mother was using methamphetamine; the sibling would often go to a friend's house and later return home and observe the mother acting differently. The 14-year-old sibling expressed frustration that they could not attend school because they had to act as a caregiver to the younger children, which they stated was not fair to them.

The allegations of threat of harm to the 3-year-old child and their 4-, 7-, 11- and 14-year-old siblings by their mother, were coded as founded. Information gathered during the CPS assessment was consistent in that the mother was struggling with ongoing methamphetamine use, which impacted her ability to safely parent. The home condition was unsafe for the children. The mother failed to provide medical and dental care for the children and sporadically tended to the children's educational needs. Collateral information indicated that the child was frequently cared for by their older siblings despite their significant medical needs.

Relevant case history under the mother's case:

Date of report: Dec. 18, 2024

Assignment decision: Closed at Screening

Allegation(s): Not Applicable

Disposition(s): Not Applicable

ODHS received a report on Dec. 18, 2024, regarding the children who were in the care of the mother. The reporter stated that the family was engaged in child welfare services in another state, following an incident of domestic violence between the father and the mother in 2023. Methamphetamine was found in the home and the children were present when the incident occurred. Additionally, the child was reported to have been hospitalized due to malnutrition and neglect, and the children were placed in out-of-home care following this incident.

The reporter did not have information about why the child welfare case in the other state had been closed but shared that they believed the mother had relapsed several times during the

case before becoming clean and sober and having her children returned to her care. The family moved back to Oregon shortly after the child welfare case was closed in the other state.

The reporter shared concern that the child, who was 3 years old, had not been receiving their monthly supply of nutritional supplements that were administered via G-tube due to their medical condition. The family had received one monthly supply in November but had not had a delivery for this in December. They expressed concern that the 3-year-old sibling had been losing weight while in the mother's care, and that the mother did not completely understand the child's medical needs. The reporter said that the child had a cerebral malformation due to substance exposure in utero. The mother was said to use methamphetamine throughout her pregnancy and was not aware she was pregnant until 7-months gestation. The sibling, who was 10 years old, was described as parentified and was the primary person to provide nutrition to the child via G-tube.

The reporter was unaware if the father moved to Oregon with the family, but there was concern that he and the mother had gotten back together.

The report was closed at screening as it did not include an allegation of abuse.

Date of report: Oct. 17, 2024

Assignment decision: Closed at Screening

Allegation(s): Not Applicable

Disposition(s): Not Applicable

ODHS received a report on Oct. 17, 2024, with concern for the children who were in the care of the mother. The reporter stated that the family had been involved in child welfare services in another state that was closed in early October 2024, and the children were determined to be safe in the care of the mother. The reporter said an unidentified third-party individual told them that the sibling who was 7 years old was not enrolled in school since returning to Oregon in early October. The reporter shared that one of the children had a disability but had no further information. Further, the reporter shared that the mother experienced mental health symptoms due to depression and PTSD but had no information about the mother's substance

use. They shared that the mother had previously been the victim of domestic violence, perpetrated by the father but did not have further details.

The report was closed at screening as it did not include an allegation of abuse.

Date of report: Sep. 12, 2019

Assignment decision: 24 Hours

Allegation(s): Neglect by the mother

Disposition(s): Unfounded

ODHS received a report on Sep. 12, 2019, alleging neglect to the sibling who was 8 years old, the sibling who was 5 years old and the sibling who was 2 years old by their mother. The reporter stated that the mother entered residential SUD services because she had been told by ODHS that her children would not be removed if she entered residential treatment. The reporter said that the mother attended four weeks of this treatment level before leaving and had sustained sobriety for about a month before resuming substance use. The 8-year-old sibling and 5-year-old sibling had been in the care of a relative for nearly four months and the 2-year-old sibling had been there for about three months. Reportedly, the mother had stopped visiting her children at the relative's home. On the times when the mother did come over to the relative's house, she did not visit with the children and the reporter believed she was actively using substances intravenously. The reporter indicated that the 5-year-old and 2-year-old siblings had medical needs that the relative was not able to facilitate for them because they did not have the legal rights to do so and had not been able to reach the mother.

The CPS caseworker met with the children and the relative at their home on Sep. 12, 2019. The relative stated that they were frustrated with the mother for not parenting the children and for not signing legal paperwork so the relative could make medical decisions for the children. The relative indicated that the plan they and the mother agreed upon included the mother getting a job and coming to parent the children when the mother could. The relative struggled financially and had been going without her own medication to provide for the children. The relative felt that the mother lacked natural supports after leaving residential treatment, which led to her relapse on methamphetamine.

The children appeared in good care and made no concerning disclosures regarding their safety.

The CPS caseworker provided the relative with community resource materials which had information regarding establishing medical, dental and WIC for the children, and for obtaining legal custody of the children.

The CPS caseworker contacted the mother via phone on Sep. 12, 2019. The mother refused to meet with ODHS in person and stated that she was residing in another town and had planned for the children to remain in the maternal grandmother's care. The mother refused a full interview but stated she had relapsed on methamphetamine one time since leaving residential treatment.

The CPS caseworker sent letters to the fathers of the children, whom were both incarcerated. There were no other documented efforts of engagement with the fathers.

The allegations of neglect to the siblings who were 8-, 5-, and 2-years old were coded as unfounded. During the CPS assessment, the children were safe in the care of the relative, who was provided with community referrals to assist with providing care to the children.

Date of report: June 17, 2019

Assignment decision: 24 Hours

Allegation(s): Neglect by the mother

Disposition(s): Unfounded

ODHS received a report on June 17, 2019, alleging neglect of the siblings who were 8-, 5- and 1-years old by their mother. The reporter stated that the mother had relapsed on methamphetamine after being sober for a year and a half. The mother's home was said to be filthy, had little food for the children and there was heavy traffic in and out of the home from unknown individuals. The children needed medical and dental needs that had not been followed up on. The reporter stated that the mother had a history of avoiding CPS caseworkers and would only allow them access to the home when she had a chance to clean up beforehand.

The CPS caseworker had face-to-face contact with the children, the mother and a relative at their home on June 18, 2019. The mother reported that she relapsed on methamphetamine

after experiencing sobriety for one year. The mother had brought her children to the relative's house to care for them while she entered residential treatment services. The mother reported she used methamphetamine daily intravenously.

The relative said that the mother brought the older children to her home about two weeks ago, and the 1-year-old entered her care three days prior to this contact. The relative reported that they assisted the mother in calling treatment programs, ideally where the 1-year-old could stay with her while attending services. The plan that the family made consisted of the children staying with the relative while the mother attended treatment, and the mother would work toward attaining employment so the children could return to her care. The caseworker provided information for community services that could assist in caring for the children.

The CPS caseworker spoke to the 8- and 5-year-old siblings together. The 8-year-old sibling indicated that their mother would not make food for them or their siblings. The 8-year-old would make noodles in the microwave for themselves and the siblings and said that they would also open cans of corn or beans which they would eat cold out of the can. The 8-year-old sibling reported that they and their siblings were always hungry when they lived with their mother but that they were eating well in the care of their relative. During the interview, the 5-year-old sibling did not contribute much, but nodded during the 8-year-old sibling's disclosures and added that they would also help sometimes with the microwave. The 1-year-old sibling was not interviewed due to their level of development, but they were observed to be clean and well-nourished in the relative's home.

On the same day, the CPS caseworker met with the mother at her home for a safety inspection. The floor was covered in food and smelled of urine. There was insufficient food supply for the children. The caseworker indicated that the condition of the home was a safety concern for the children, particularly for the 1-year-old sibling. The mother told the caseworker that the children did not have established medical and dental providers.

The CPS caseworker spoke the mother's landlord as collateral. The landlord believed that the mother was using and selling drugs in the home while the children were present. The landlord added that there is traffic in and out of the home all night long

The CPS caseworker spoke to the father of the 8- and 5-year-old siblings on June 27, 2019, in response to a letter the caseworker sent notifying him of the CPS assessment. The father was currently incarcerated, and he said he was not able to worry about the care of the children but

would do so when he was released from the correctional facility. He declined a full interview for the CPS assessment.

The CPS caseworker sent a letter to the 1-year-old sibling's alleged father, but he did not make himself available during the CPS assessment.

The CPS caseworker implemented a protective action plan on June 24, 2019, which reflected the plan made by the family. The protective action plan dissolved with no further action by ODHS because the mother was confirmed to have entered residential treatment on June 26, 2019.

The allegations of neglect to the 8-, 5- and 1-year old siblings by their mother was coded as unfounded. During the CPS assessment, the children were in the care of a relative. The condition of the mother's home and the mother's parenting practices presented safety risks to the children. The mother recognized the need for supportive services, which she enrolled in.

Date of report: Feb. 22, 2019

Assignment decision: 24 Hours

Allegation(s): Neglect by the mother

Disposition(s): Unfounded

ODHS received a report on Feb. 22, 2019, alleging neglect to the 8-, 5-, and 1-year old siblings by their mother. The reporter stated that the mother sent text messages to them saying that she had relapsed on methamphetamine, and that the mother's ex-significant other had ended their relationship after finding straws with white powder underneath the bed. There were concerns that the heat had been turned off at the home and the children appeared disheveled. Additionally, the mother wrecked her vehicle earlier in the school year and the 8-year-old sibling missed months of school before the mother established a bus route for school.

The CPS caseworker attempted unannounced contact at the family home on Feb. 25, 2019, but no one was present. On the same day, the caseworker had face-to-face contact with the 8-year-old sibling at school. The sibling stated that they would get picked up from school by the mother and her friend who assisted with transportation. The sibling confirmed that the mother wrecked her car, and it was difficult for them to get to school. The sibling said the mother had

made special arrangements for the school bus and it was now easier for them to get to school. The sibling said that their home was warm enough because they had electrical service and several heaters in the home.

The CPS caseworker contacted the mother via phone, and they planned to meet the family at the home, which occurred on Feb. 27, 2019. The mother indicated that she had not used methamphetamine for over two years and submitted a urinalysis which was positive for THC only. The mother showed the caseworker where THC products were kept, which was a lockbox out of reach of the children. The mother indicated that she uses THC at night when the children are asleep, and she would go out to smoke. The home was observed to be safe and appropriate.

The CPS spoke to collaterals at the 8-year-old sibling's school, who indicated that they had missed a significant amount of school due to the mother's transportation issues but had been much better since making special plans. They had no further concerns regarding the family.

The CPS caseworker spoke to the children's medical provider on March 14, 2017. The 5-year-old sibling had been seen recently and was prescribed medication for eczema. They had no further concerns for the family.

The allegations of neglect to the 8-, 5- and 1-year old siblings by their mother, were coded as unfounded. The 8-year-old sibling did not make any concerning disclosures and the UA the mother provided was positive THC, which was stored in a safe place and did not apparently affect her ability to parent.

Date of report: Oct. 26, 2018

Assignment decision: 24 Hours

Allegation(s): Neglect by the mother; Neglect by the mother's significant other

Disposition(s): Founded; Unfounded

ODHS received a report on Oct. 26, 2018, alleging neglect to the 7-, 4- and 1-year old siblings by their mother and her significant other. The reporter expressed concerns that the children were having contact with the significant other, who was unsafe around children. The significant

other's children tested positive for methamphetamine, and they were charged with child endangerment related to this. The mother was residing with the significant other, who had unsupervised time with the children while the mother was at work.

The CPS caseworker had unannounced face-to-face contact with the family on Oct. 26, 2018, at their home.

The mother reported that she was the primary caregiver to the children except for when she worked, which they were supervised by their significant other for a maximum of two hours. She stated no concern for her significant other taking care of her children. She acknowledged that the significant other had open ODHS involvement with concerns around substance use but that they had been clean for a period of 90 days and had scheduled an intake with a local treatment provider for supportive services.

The significant other denied any current methamphetamine use and disclosed that they used marijuana daily and regularly drank beer. They denied ever being intoxicated when caring for the children. They reported that there were no formal charges filed for child endangerment but acknowledged the concerns from ODHS. They stated that their children's exposure to methamphetamine was due to skin-to-skin contact with them. The significant other denied ever being alone with the children, that the mother or the family's roommate were always present when he was with the children.

The roommate provided collateral information to the CPS caseworker. The roommate said they had no knowledge of drug use in the home beyond marijuana and alcohol use by the significant other, and marijuana use by the mother. The roommate said that they had known the mother for years and that she was at risk of becoming homeless, so they allowed her and the children to move into their residence. He did not know the significant other but after meeting them, allowed them to stay as well. The roommate denied knowing that the mother or significant other were involved with ODHS. The roommate denied caring for the mother's children in any capacity.

The CPS caseworker spoke to the 7- and 4-year-old siblings, who provided minimal information regarding the allegations. Both of the children said that everything was fine in the home but did not contribute details about interactions with the significant other, though they said they were nice.

On the following day, October 27, the CPS caseworker returned to the home to speak with the mother and significant other. The significant other agreed to sign releases of information so the caseworker could speak more freely about the concerns from ODHS. The caseworker informed the significant other that they had an active warrant from local LEA related to the pending charges. The significant other acknowledged this information and agreed to immediately leave the home. The mother reported that she did not previously know the full scope of the concerns with the significant other's history and reported that they would have no further contact with her children.

The CPS caseworker met with the 7-year-old sibling at school on October 29, 2018. The 7-year-old sibling told the caseworker that the significant other had remained in the home over the weekend and recounted a daytrip the family took. The sibling denied any knowledge of drug use, or unsafe behavior from any adult in the home.

On the same day, the CPS caseworker returned to the home, where the mother and significant other were present. The significant other acknowledged that they remained in the home over the weekend and was agreeable to local LEA arresting them for the outstanding warrant. Local LEA was called, and the significant other was taken into custody.

ODHS implemented a protective action plan, with a relative supervising the home environment for the significant other's presence.

The caseworker returned to the home on Nov. 1, 2018, and met with the mother. The mother reported that she hadn't had contact with the significant other since their arrest and had no intent of having further contact with them. She indicated that the significant other lied about the extent of the concerns from ODHS but that they treated her and the children well during their time with the family.

The allegations of neglect to the children by their mother were coded as founded. After the mother learned the full extent of concerns ODHS had with the significant other, she continued to allow contact between them and the children. The allegations of neglect to the children by the significant other were coded as unfounded. There was no evidence that the significant other had acted neglectfully toward the children despite the concerns from ODHS regarding their contact with them.

Date of report: Oct. 15, 2018

Assignment decision: Closed at Screening

Allegation(s): Not Applicable

Disposition(s): Not Applicable

ODHS received a report on Oct. 15, 2018, with concerns for the 7-, 4- and 1-year old siblings by the mother's significant other. It was reported that the significant other had two children who were not in their care due to substance use, was not in compliance with treatment and required supervision while in contact with his children. The reporter shared information, which was found on social media, and reflected he was in a relationship with the mother.

This report was closed at screening as there was insufficient information indicating that the significant other was providing care to the mother's children.

Date of report: July 17, 2017

Assignment decision: 24 Hours

Allegation(s): Threat of Harm by the mother

Disposition(s): Unfounded

ODHS received a report on July 17, 2017, alleging threat of harm to the sibling, who was newborn, by their mother. The reporter stated that they knew the mother's older children were out her care due to concerns related to domestic violence and substance use. The newborn sibling and the mother tested negative for all substances at the time of delivery.

The CPS caseworker contacted the newborn sibling, the mother and a relative at the local hospital where the sibling was delivered on July 17, 2017. The mother stated she was prepared for the sibling to be discharged with the relative, who was also caring for their older children, if necessary. The mother reported that she was clean from methamphetamine for 8 months, was attending supportive services and had attained temporary housing. An initial safety plan with the relative caring for the newborn was implemented until further assessment could take place.

The CPS caseworker met with the mother at her residence on July 20, 2017. The mother was staying with another relative, who had been a positive support to her. The home was clean and appropriate, and the mother had a bassinet and items for the newborn. The caseworker explained that since the mother had a positive support system, was engaging services and had maintained sobriety for 8 months (as verified through UA records) the newborn could return to her care with an in-home plan.

The allegation of threat of harm to the newborn sibling by their mother was coded unfounded. Despite that the mother's older children were out of her care, she had been maintaining progress in services and had a supportive network, and the newborn was returned to her care after the initial out-of-home safety plan.

Date of report: May 15, 2017

Assignment decision: Closed at Screening

Allegation(s): Not Applicable

Disposition(s): Not Applicable

ODHS received a report on May 15, 2017, with concerns for the sibling, who was in utero, by their alleged father. The reporter stated that the mother experienced domestic violence by her partner, the alleged father, on May 14, 2017. The mother's jaw was broken in three places; her jaw was wired shut and she required a follow-up surgery with a specialized medical provider. The mother told the reporter that prior to the incident, she awoke in the middle of the night to use the restroom and found the father snorting methamphetamine on a coffee table. The mother got upset with him, which escalated into a physical altercation where the father punched the mother. The mother recalled blacking out and quickly becoming aware that the father was standing over her and she was bleeding heavily. He helped her up, got her to the bathroom and assisted in cleaning up the injury. The mother told the reporter that the father pulled out a knife and was threatening suicide because of his actions. The father agreed to bring the mother to the hospital if she said she had fallen out of bed, which she agreed to so he would take her in. The mother informed hospital staff about the altercation and local LEA arrested the father due to the incident.

The report was closed at screening because the sibling was in utero and the other children were not in the parent's care, but a notification was sent to the birthing hospital.

Date of report: Jan. 13, 2017

Assignment decision: Closed at Screening

Allegation(s): Not Applicable

Disposition(s): Not Applicable

ODHS received a report on Jan. 13, 2017, with concerns for the sibling, who was in utero, by their mother. The reporter said that the mother was approximately 2-3 months pregnant with the sibling and was living with their alleged father. The reporter indicated that the mother's children were out of her care due to safety concerns and was struggling with methamphetamine use.

The report was closed at screening because it was concerning an unborn child, but notifications were sent to the birthing hospital.

Date of report: Feb. 17, 2016

Assignment decision: 24 Hours

Allegation(s): Threat of Harm by the sibling's father; Neglect by the parents

Disposition(s): Founded

ODHS received a report on Feb. 13, 2016, with allegations of threat of harm and neglect to the siblings, who were 5 and 2 years old, by their parents. Reportedly, the mother woke the 5-year-old sibling in the middle of the night saying that they need to leave because the father and their relative were going to shoot the mother and bury her in the woods. The father was said to hold a pistol to the mother's head. The mother freed herself somehow and went to the children's bedroom to get them dressed and leave. The mother went to a store parking lot nearby and called LEA. The mother told LEA about the incident and that his relative was hiding in the backyard of the home.

LEA officers went to the home, where another relative also resided. The father was not present during this contact. The relative at the home said that they could hear the parents arguing through the wall and that the mother was screaming at him and doing most of the arguing. The relative indicated that the father attempted to leave but the mother would not let him. The relative said that the father finally left prior to the mother leaving with the children. The relative did not observe anything involving a firearm but that there were guns in the home and the relative did not witness anything involving a firearm during the altercation.

This report was assessed alongside the report dated Jan. 19, 2016. This summary includes information from that assessment. See the narrative summarized below for information pertaining to that screening report.

The CPS caseworker coordinated a courtesy CPS interview with the 5- and 2-year-old siblings, who were in the care of a relative in another town. The courtesy caseworker contacted the children and the relative at their home on Jan. 26, 2016.

The 5-year-old sibling told the courtesy caseworker that their mother and father would fight with words and that the father would push the mother into a wall. The sibling reported that they would try to stop it by standing in front of them and putting up their hands in a stop motion. When the sibling did this, the father would push the sibling down and yell at them. The sibling said that this made them feel sad. The 5-year-old sibling said that the 2-year-old sibling would watch cartoons and sometimes cry when the parents were fighting because they did not like it. The courtesy caseworker did not complete an interview with the 2-year-old sibling due to their developmental level. The relatives who were caring for the children shared concerns for drug use by the parents, concerns for the condition of the parent's home, and for the availability of food for the children.

After several attempts to reach the mother, the CPS caseworker contacted the mother at her home on Feb. 1, 2016. The mother denied access to the home by stating they wanted the father there before allowing ODHS into the home. She denied any drug use by her or the father and denied any current domestic violence between her and the father. She reported not knowing why the 5-year-old sibling disclosed fighting between the parents. The children were still in the care of the relative in another town.

On Feb. 17, 2016, the CPS caseworker contacted the mother, who went to stay with the relative who was caring for the children. The mother reported that she did not want to return to the

home with the father because she was concerned for her and the children's safety. The mother admitted recent methamphetamine use and ongoing domestic violence perpetrated by the father. She reported that the father also used methamphetamine.

On the same day, the mother and her two children provided UAs, and the 5-year-old sibling participated in a forensic interview regarding the allegations at the local CAC. During the interview, the 5-year-old sibling disclosed that the parents fought and hit each other, which they re-enacted by slapping the table. However, the sibling could not attribute specific incidents to this behavior by the parents. The sibling did not disclose any incidents between the parents involving a firearm.

In the days following the forensic interview, the CPS caseworker received the results for the UAs submitted by the mother and children. All were positive for methamphetamine.

ODHS implemented a safety plan with the children remaining in the care of their mother at the relative's home, who were approved as safety service providers. The relatives would monitor contact between the mother and the children and agreed to report if the father were to arrive at their home.

The CPS caseworker spoke to the sibling's father on Feb. 24, 2016, via phone. The father reported having no clue how the children could have been positive for methamphetamine. The father denied using the substance since the children were born. He disclosed that he and the mother would argue and that they would sometimes grab one another by the arms but denied further physical violence. He denied any threats or altercations with the mother involving a firearm. The caseworker arranged face-to-face contact for March 1, 2016, which the father did not attend.

The CPS caseworker had phone contact with the mother on March 4, 2016. She apologized to the caseworker for not being truthful in the initial interview with the caseworker and stated that the father was waiting in the car during that interview. The mother disclosed that the father began perpetrating domestic violence toward her in 2011. She filed a restraining order for her and the 5-year-old sibling, and she did not have contact with the father for a year. The parents reconciled, things were safe for a time, and the 2-year-old sibling was born. The mother stated that the father began using methamphetamine again in 2015 when he began travelling out of town for work. The mother reported that the father would become agitated and aggressive when coming down from methamphetamine. She reported one incident in August 2015, where

she believed the father broke one of her ribs. During that incident, the father pushed her down, choked her to the point of blacking out and punched her in the back of the head. The 5-year-old sibling attempted to intervene by saying they were going to call 911, and the father responded by breaking the phone. The 2-year-old sibling was sleeping during this altercation.

Regarding the current report, the mother said that the 5-year-old sibling woke her up in the middle of the night, saying that the father and their relative were going to kill her and bury her at a location nearby. The mother said she tried to leave with both children, and the father cocked a pistol and held it to the back of her head. The mother said they put the children down slowly and the 5-year-old ran back into the home stating that they did not want to leave. She re-entered the home and tried to pick up the 5-year-old, but they wiggled out of her attempts. The father then pulled out his phone recording the mother and stating patronizing things toward her. She stated that the children then ran out the door and she tried to follow but was stopped by the father's relative. The father left the home to follow the children. The mother indicated that the children ran up a bike path nearby and the father could not follow them in their truck. The mother said that she was able to get out of the home during the commotion, located the children and called 911. The mother said that the 5-year-old sibling was so scared during this incident, they were screaming that they were going to die.

The mother denied using methamphetamine in the home but stated that her home would sometimes smell like methamphetamine. She confronted the father about this but he shut down her questions.

The allegations of neglect to the 5- and 2-year-old siblings by their mother were coded as founded. The mother indicated ongoing methamphetamine use by her and the father and that the home environment was the likely means of exposure to the children. The allegations of threat of harm to the siblings by the father were coded as founded. The 5-year-old sibling and the mother disclosed ongoing domestic violence perpetrated by the father toward the mother.

Date of report: Jan. 19, 2016

Assignment decision: Alternative Response: 5 Days

Allegation(s): Threat of Harm by the sibling's father

Disposition(s): Opened in Error

ODHS received a report on Jan. 19, 2016, with allegations of threat of harm and neglect to the siblings who were 5 and 2 years old by their parents. The reporter stated that the mother and the children went to a relative's house on Jan. 1, 2016, and the mother was observed to be under the influence of methamphetamine. The mother told the reporter that she had been using methamphetamine for three months and that the father had been using the substance for the past year.

The reporter shared that the mother wanted to leave the relative's home, and the relative told her they would call LEA and ODHS if she were to leave with the children. The mother decided to leave the children in the relative's care while she returned home. The reporter stated that the 5-year-old sibling disclosed ongoing domestic violence between the parents, though the reporter did not have a timeline of events. The sibling disclosed that the father assaulted the mother. The sibling tried to get in between the parents and was shoved down by the father, who began screaming at the sibling. The sibling also tried to call 911, but the father took the phone away and smashed it. The 5-year-old sibling was said to struggle with sleep due to these concerns and believed that the father was going to kill the mother and take the children with him. The parents had been together for 6-7 years, and the reporter believed that domestic violence was occurring throughout that timeframe. The mother told the reporter that the father was controlling of her and would threaten to hit her if she did not use methamphetamine with him.

This assessment was assessed alongside the report dated Feb. 17, 2016, and further information about these allegations can be found in the summary above.

The allegations for threat of harm were coded as opened in error. The subsequent allegations on Feb. 17, 2016, were duplicative to these. Dispositions for threat of harm were coded as founded in the assessment summary dated Feb. 17, 2016, which is summarized above.

Concerns regarding actions taken or not taken

The CIRT observed improvement opportunities from this case at the screening level. On Dec. 18, 2024, ODHS received a report that was closed at screening, however, the CIRT identified the information contained in this report was a report of abuse. Specifically, ODHS was notified that the child had not received prescribed nutritional supplements during that time. Given the child's prior child welfare history in Oregon and recent involvement in another state—both

involving concerns related to malnutrition—this report represented a critical opportunity to engage the family.

Several systemic factors impact child abuse hotline screening staff, including mandated response timelines, workforce turnover, the need for rapid decision-making—which can lead to decision fatigue—and the complexity of navigating extensive child welfare histories within the electronic database. These pressures can hinder the thorough collection of collateral information that is sometimes necessary to make well-informed assignment decisions. The CIRT acknowledged the significant production pressures faced by hotline screeners and supervisors, particularly given the high volume of screening reports ODHS receives.

The need for collateral information is likewise observed when there is an absence of information in a report of abuse. Understanding child vulnerability sometimes requires additional collateral information beyond what the reporter provides. There are ongoing systemic challenges in obtaining information from other states which were evident in the Dec. 19, 2024, report. A lack of information provided by the reporter regarding the family's current functioning influenced the assignment decision in that report. This case highlighted an opportunity for improvement, as ORCAH continues to explore strategies for assessing child vulnerability based on the content and quality of reports received.

Recommendations for improvement

The CIRT recommends that leaders from ORCAH continue to explore quality improvement efforts for supporting the screening workforce to gather information around understanding child vulnerability at the screening level. Ideas presented by the CIRT were: Exploring a process for "pre-screening" to alleviate workforce production pressure, technology improvements, and a process for escalating assignment decisions when there are difficulties in understanding child vulnerability. Any new strategies identified will be presented to the executive leadership team by February 2026.

ODHS Child Welfare is a member of the National Partnership for Child Safety, a quality improvement collaborative comprised of more than 35 county, state, and tribal child and family service jurisdictions whose mission is to improve child safety and prevent maltreatment and fatalities by strengthening families and promoting innovations in child protection. A recent CIRT resulted in recommendations the Department approach and collaborate with the

partnership around the challenges and barriers experienced in cross-jurisdictional information sharing to explore potential solutions. This recommendation is currently underway.

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