Child Fatality Summary

Child's Name: Tobias Long

County: Orange

Date of Birth: 05/21/2019

Date of Death: 05/12/2025

Report Number: 2025-164016

Family Composition Chart

Name	Age at Time of the Incident	Relationship with Deceased Child
Tobias Long	5 years old	Child Victim
[redacted]	12 years old	Sibling
[redacted]	14 years old	Sibling
Cassandra Benthall	43 years old	Mother
Robert Long	44 years old	Father

Circumstances Surrounding Death

On May 13, 2025, five-year-old Tobias passed away after becoming unresponsive on May 9, 2025, while in the care of his mother, Cassandra.

According to the Department and other available agency records, both Cassandra and Tobias had been diagnosed with asthma. Tobias was first diagnosed in 2019 and was hospitalized in January 2022 for an asthma exacerbation. Following his hospitalization, he was seen by a pulmonologist and prescribed a nebulizer machine along with Albuterol. However, Tobias did not have any follow-up visits with a pulmonologist, and his prescribed asthma medications were eventually discontinued. In October 2023, Tobias attended a pediatric visit for allergies and nasal congestion, during which his mother did not disclose his asthma diagnosis or the need for asthma medications.

Tobias reportedly experienced daily breathing difficulties, which the mother treated using her own prescribed asthma medication. She taught him how to self-administer the treatments and instructed him to use them only once per day since the medication was prescribed for an adult. On May 8, 2025, Tobias appeared well during the day but began experiencing respiratory distress later that night. Following his mother's instructions, he used her nebulizer and administered three consecutive doses of her Albuterol medication over a 45-minute period. The mother also provided him with her prescribed Advair 250/50, which she confirmed he had been taking once daily despite it being an adult dosage. After the treatment, Tobias appeared stable and went to sleep.

On the morning of May 9, 2025, at approximately 8:00 a.m., Tobias woke up and began playing on his iPad. When his mother asked if he was ready for breakfast, he told her that he needed a breathing treatment first. He again used the nebulizer for about 45 minutes but showed no improvement. The mother administered a Respiclick rescue

inhaler and attempted to calm him by instructing him to breathe through his nose. When his condition did not improve, she provided another dose of Advair 250/50. Tobias then collapsed, rolling on the floor and saying that he could not breathe and that his heart hurt. Cassandra moved him to the couch, where he became limp. His sister, [redacted], noticed that his lips were blue and called 911 at 9:25am. [redacted] initiated CPR, and the mother carried Tobias outside for emergency responders upon their arrival to continue resuscitation efforts. EMS transported Tobias to AdventHealth for Children's Hospital.

Later that day, the Department met with the mother and the children at the hospital. The children were observed to be free of marks or bruises suggestive of physical abuse. However, concerns were raised regarding their hygiene and the condition of the family home. Child Protective Investigator McFall conducted a home visit the same day and observed that the family's residence was in a severely compromised state. The home showed widespread sanitation issues, including a strong odor and evidence of a significant pest infestation. Clutter and disorganization were present throughout the living areas and bedrooms, and structural concerns were noted, including water damage and deteriorating bathroom fixtures. Asthma medication prescribed to Cassandra was also observed in the home, with the most recent fill date of May 6, 2025. Due to the unsafe living conditions, a Present Danger Safety Plan was implemented with the maternal aunt, [redacted], who assumed care of the surviving children. Overall, the conditions of the home raised substantial concerns regarding the safety and well-being of the children.

The case was referred to the Child Protection Team (CPT) on May 9, 2025, and all children underwent medical evaluations. CPT identified indicators of medical neglect affecting each child. On May 12, 2025, [redacted] completed forensic interviews, during which they described Tobias's ongoing asthma-related breathing difficulties and confirmed that he regularly received their mother's medication. The children recounted that his symptoms worsened on the morning of May 9, ultimately leading to a medical emergency. Both children reported that their father, Robert, was not present at the time and described his history of substance use and prolonged absences from the home. They also reported that the home was in poor condition and heavily infested with roaches, noting that their mother was unable to manage the infestation, further contributing to an unsafe environment.

On May 12, 2025, at 5:53 pm, Tobias was pronounced deceased.

It was reported that the surviving siblings were transported by family to Georgia later that day, where a wellness check was conducted. The Department coordinated with Children's Legal Services and obtained a TICO on May 13, 2025. The following day, May 14, 2025, the children were returned to Florida and sheltered by the Department.

The Orange County Sheriff's Office investigated the death of the child (2025-026590). No arrests were made, nor charges filed.

No autopsy was performed. The death certificate was received on May 27, 2025. It was signed and certified by Aaron J. Godshall, M.D., on May 19, 2025. DC# 25-25-087876.

Cause of Death: Brain Death Immediate, Severe Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy 3 Days, Severe Uncontrolled Asthma 4 Days

Manner of Death: Natural

On October 9, 2025, the Department of Children and Families' investigation was closed with:

- Verified findings of Death, Inadequate Supervision, Medical Neglect and Environmental Hazards as to Tobias against the mother, Cassandra, as caregiver responsible.
- Verified findings of Death, Inadequate Supervision, Medical Neglect, Environmental Hazards and Substance Misuse: Illicit Drugs as to Tobias against the Father, Robert, as a caregiver responsible.
- [redacted]
- [redacted].

Other Children in the Family:

The siblings were deemed unsafe and removed from the mother's care.

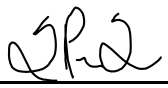
Summary of Current Agency Involvement with Family

The family did not have any open services.

Summary of Prior Agency Involvement with Family

The family does not have any prior abuse report history. [redacted]

The mother had 3 screened outs between 2000 and 2025 [redacted] Tobias had never been enrolled in school.



10/17/2025

Central Region Child Fatality Prevention Specialist
Stephanie Pena

Date



10/17/2025

Central Region C9 Operations Manager
Brittany Garcia

Date