STATE OF DELAWARE
CHILD PROTECTION ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION
C/O OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 18, 2026

The Honorable Matthew Meyer
Office of the Governor
820 N. French Street, 12th Floor
Wilmington, DE 19801

RE: Reviews of Child Deaths and Near Deaths Due to Abuse or Neglect

Dear Governor Meyer:

As one of its many statutory duties, the Child Protection Accountability Commission ("CPAC") is responsible for the review of child deaths and near-deaths due to abuse or neglect. Thus far, in calendar year 2026, CPAC accepted 54 cases for review (7 deaths and 47 near-deaths) and screened out 101 cases, some of which occurred in 2025.

As required by law, CPAC approved findings from 35 cases at its November 18, 2026, meeting.[1] These cases are divided into two sections – cases that received a final review after completion of prosecution and cases that were reviewed for the first time.

This quarter, 18 cases received a final review. These were deaths and near-deaths that occurred between March 2022 and September 2025. Thirteen (13) of the 18 cases resulted in charges; one of those cases involved two defendants and four cases were sibling groups involving the same defendant(s), for a total of 12 charged individuals. Of the 12 defendants, 9 were convicted; 4 of the defendants received probation and 5 received Level V incarceration. One defendant, who was convicted of manslaughter of a four-year-old victim, received a 12-year jail sentence. CPAC and its committees continue to focus on outcomes in these serious child abuse cases, and continue to work to improve timely decision-making, civil and criminal collaboration, presentence investigations, and the provision of victim impact statements. These final reviews resulted in four additional findings.

The 17 remaining cases are from deaths or near-deaths that occurred between December 2025 and March 2026. Of these cases, 12 near-deaths will have no further review, 11 were not prosecuted and one received probation before judgment; these cases include abusive head

[1] 16 Del.C. §932.

trauma, abusive abdominal injury, skull fracture, bone fractures, failure to thrive, medical neglect, and poisoning via drug ingestion.

There are 5 cases- 2 deaths and 3 near-deaths- that will remain open pending prosecutorial outcomes. These cases involve dehydration, blunt impact trauma, diabetic ketoacidosis, abusive head trauma, poisoning via drug ingestion, and bone fractures.

For the 17 cases from December 2025 to March 2026, there were 32 strengths and 19 findings across system areas. Nineteen (19) strengths and 4 findings were noted for the Multidisciplinary Team Response. These results reflect continued progress in strengthening multidisciplinary collaboration and frontline investigative expertise.

Five (5) strengths and 5 findings were identified regarding the Division of Family Services ("DFS"). Three (3) of the findings related to safety concerns. The remaining 2 involved incorrect risk assessment and unresolved risk at the time of case closure. No additional trends were identified in the other findings this quarter.

For the medical response, this quarter demonstrated 8 strengths and 10 findings. Seven (7) of those findings related to standard of care by various specialists and lack of scheduling follow-up care. Two (2) of those findings indicate breakdowns in reporting the case to the DFS Report Line by the treating hospital and urgent care clinics.

This past quarter indicates the need for continued improvement in reporting and will be addressed through the recognition and reporting training for medical professionals, which emphasizes identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. Delaware physicians (MD/DO) are required under 24 Del. C. § 1723 to complete one hour of mandatory reporting training during each biennial licensure renewal cycle. The next renewal deadline is March 31, 2027. First-time participants must complete the full one-hour course. Physicians who have previously completed the training may take either the full course or a 30-minute refresher combined with a 30-minute supplemental course addressing emerging child protection issues. OCA administers these trainings to strengthen the identification and reporting of suspected child abuse.

The number, complexity, and severity of child abuse cases remain high. The multidisciplinary team continues to strengthen its expertise and response to these matters, as reflected in the identified strengths. For your reference, we have included the strengths, findings, and detailed summaries of all cases discussed in this letter. In addition, the CPAC Data Dashboards and summaries of CAN findings and drug ingestions are provided to offer a comprehensive view of the volume and complexity of child welfare cases in Delaware over time. CPAC remains available and prepared to answer any further questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Kelly C. Ensslin, Esquire
Executive Director

Child Protection Accountability Commission

Enclosures

Cc: CPAC Commissioners, General Assembly

Child Protection Accountability Commission

Child Abuse and Neglect Panel

Strengths Summary

INITIAL REVIEWS	
MDT Response	**19**
Communication	1
Documentation	2
General - Civil Investigation	1
General - Criminal Investigation	2
General - Criminal/Civil Investigation	12
Interviews - Child	1
Medical	**8**
Communication	1
Medical Exam/Standard of Care - ED	2
Medical Exam/Standard of Care - Forensics	1
Medical Exam/Standard of Care - Specialists	1
Reporting	3
Safety/ Use of History/ Supervisory Oversight	**1**
Oversight of Agreement	1
Unresolved Risk	**4**
Parental Risk Factors	4
Grand Total	**32**

FINAL REVIEWS	
Legal	**3**
Prosecution/Pleas/Sentence	3
MDT Response	**1**
General - Civil Investigation	1
Unresolved Risk	**1**
Contacts with Family	1
Grand Total	**5**

TOTAL CAN PANEL STRENGTHS	**37**

Office of the Child Advocate
900 King Street, Ste 350
Wilmington, DE 19801

Prepared 10/21/2026

Child Protection Accountability Commission

Child Abuse and Neglect Panel

Findings Summary

INITIAL REVIEWS	
MDT Response	**4**
General - Civil Investigation	1
Interviews - Child	1
Medical Exam	2
Medical	**10**
Home Visiting Programs	1
Medical Exam/ Standard of Care - CARE Team	2
Medical Exam/ Standard of Care - ED	2
Medical Exam/ Standard of Care - PCP	1
Medical Exam/ Standard of Care - Radiology	2
Reporting	2
Risk Assessment/ Caseloads	**1**
Risk Assessment - Screen Out	1
Safety/ Use of History/ Supervisory Oversight	**3**
Safety - Inappropriate Parent/ Relative Component	1
Safety - Oversight of Agreement	1
Use of History	1
Unresolved Risk	**1**
Parental Risk Factors	1
Grand Total	**19**

FINAL REVIEWS	
MDT Response	**1**
Reporting	1
Risk Assessment/ Caseloads	**1**
Caseloads	1
Unresolved Risk	**2**
Child Risk Factors	1
Contacts with Family	1
Grand Total	**4**

TOTAL CAN PANEL FINDINGS	**23**

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Prepared 10/19/2026