



**REVIEW OF THE NEAR DEATH OF M.C.
CLEVELAND COUNTY, OKLAHOMA**

Report Release Date: December 14, 2023

Overview

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight received a request regarding the near death of one-year-old M.C. The Cleveland County District Attorney filed a felony charge of Child Neglect and Possession of Selling Paraphernalia While Not Using a Motor Vehicle on July 10, 2020, against the mother, Theresa Taylor. A plea of guilty was entered on October 1, 2021. On November 19, 2021, Ms. Taylor was sentenced to five years in prison for count one and one year for count two.

Identifiers

Child's Name:	M.C.	Sibling One:	Fourteen Years
Age at Time of Incident:	One Year		
Date of Near-Death:	May 29, 2020		

Person(s) Responsible for the Child (PRFC):
· Theresa Taylor

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth did not become aware of this case until after the near-death incident of the child.

Actions

The release of the following summary of the actions taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and the proceedings in the District Court is authorized by 10A O.S. Section 1-6-105

The OJSO did not become aware of this case until after the near-death of M.C.

Near-Death Incident

The Cleveland County OKDHS received the near-death report on May 29, 2020. Reportedly, law enforcement was called out to a medical facility due to one-year-old M.C. who ingested heroin. Law enforcement stated the mother, Theresa Taylor, reported to them that M.C. was in the bathroom and the foil that contained the heroin might have belonged to another person who lived in the home. The mother was arrested for outstanding warrants as well as child endangerment.

The OKDHS documented that the mother brought M.C. to a medical facility. Upon arrival, M.C. was unconscious, had no pulse, and was not breathing. The medical staff was able to stabilize M.C.

According to the police report, the mother stated M.C. was playing in the bathroom. When she went to check



on M.C., she saw a piece of foil in M.C.'s mouth and a few minutes later M.C. began to lose consciousness.

The OKDHS documented that when law enforcement questioned the mother, she admitted to knowing the foil containing heroin was in the bathroom trashcan, knowing M.C. was playing in the bathroom where the trashcan was located, and being the sole caregiver of M.C. during that time. The mother also admitted that she smoked heroin in the bedroom that she shares with M.C., while M.C. is sleeping, and she keeps foils with heroin residue on them in her bedroom for when she needs another hit.

The OKDHS documented that when law enforcement searched the home, they found four foils in the bathroom, seven foils in the mother's bedroom, a baggie under the bed with three other baggies with residue on all of them, and another bag with burnt foil and a straw. Everything was within reach of M.C.

The OKDHS made Substantiated findings of Neglect/Near Death, Neglect/Inadequate or Dangerous Shelter, and Neglect/Threat of Harm by Theresa Taylor to M.C.

M.C. was placed into the emergency custody of the OKDHS on June 1, 2020.

Prior Involvement of the PRFC with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services

The OJSO identified three pertinent reports of child neglect prior to the near-death incident of one-year-old M.C. A report was received on November 21, 2017. Reportedly, the mother, Theresa Taylor, was nauseated and then became unconscious at home. Another person in the home began cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and called 911. Emergency services transported the mother to the emergency department. The mother reported to medical professionals that she had used heroin and became sick. The mother was currently pregnant, but it appeared she was not receiving prenatal care, as she could not provide a doctor's name. The mother left the medical facility against medical advice because a medical professional wanted to complete a computer tomography (CT) scan to make sure the baby was okay.

The OKDHS accepted this report as a Priority I Investigation. The OKDHS documented they contacted the family on November 21, 2017.

During the initial contact, the OKDHS documented the mother stated she was picked up by another person. She stated she became sick in the car and when she got out of the car, she threw up in the yard. The mother stated she did a small shot of heroin in the front yard of her home. The mother stated she did not remember anything else until she was in the ambulance and started to regain consciousness. The mother stated she was twenty-six weeks pregnant and last went to a prenatal appointment three weeks prior. The mother stated she has used heroin throughout her entire pregnancy and used it up to two times a day. The mother stated she planned to attend a rehabilitation facility and was waiting for an open bed.

The OKDHS documented the mother had an eleven-year-old child, Sibling One, who was in the custody of a relative. The OKDHS documented the mother did not live in the same home as the child and rarely spoke to the child.

The OKDHS made an unsubstantiated finding as to the allegations of Neglect/Threat of Harm-Substance of Sibling One by Theresa Taylor.

A report was received on March 6, 2018. Reportedly, the mother, Theresa Taylor, was admitted to a medical facility on March 5, 2018. It was reported the mother was an opiate and heroin user. The mother gave birth to a baby and the mother and baby's urine was positive for opiates. The mother stated she used heroin often. The baby was placed in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit due to opiate exposure and withdrawal symptoms.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation. The OKDHS documented they contacted the family on March 6, 2018.

During the initial contact, the OKDHS documented that the mother, Theresa Taylor, stated she struggled with drug use for about eight years. Her drug of choice was opiates. However, within the last year, she started to use heroin. She stated she used heroin and opiates often on and off throughout her pregnancy. She stated she used heroin two weeks before she gave birth and opiates two days before she gave birth. She stated she had an eleven-year-old child, Sibling One, who was in the care of a relative.

The OKDHS made a Substantiated finding as to the allegation of Neglect/Threat of Harm-Substance of the baby by Theresa Taylor. The OKDHS requested a deprived petition be filed on behalf of the baby. The baby was placed in the emergency custody of the OKDHS on March 9, 2018.

A report was received on May 3, 2019. Reportedly, the mother, Theresa Taylor, had a history of drug use. Upon admission to the medical facility, the mother tested negative for drugs. It was reported the mother used it early in her pregnancy and she had a positive drug test for heroin at her first prenatal appointment. The baby, M.C. tested negative at birth.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority II Investigation. The OKDHS documented they contacted the family on May 4, 2019.

During the initial contact, the OKDHS documented, the mother, Theresa Taylor, stated she had been sober for nine months and had been participating in drug court for over three months. The mother stated she was actively engaged in counseling services.

The OKDHS documented that M.C.'s umbilical cord results were negative for drugs.

The OKDHS documented collateral witnesses stating the mother was participating in drug court and had not used any drugs. Collateral witnesses stated the mother was drug tested ten times a month and every test has been negative.

The OKDHS made an unsubstantiated finding as to the allegation of Neglect/Threat of Harm-Substance of M.C. by Theresa Taylor.

Judicial Proceedings Prior to the Child's Death Incident

The OJSO identified one judicial proceeding prior to the child's near-death incident. That proceeding involved M.C.'s older sibling that was no longer in the mother's care at the time of the child's near-death incident. That child was removed from the mother's care and placed in OKDHS custody on March 9, 2018. The reason for removal was drug use by the mother.

The mother failed to complete her Individual Service Plan (ISP) and her parental rights were eventually terminated. That child was later adopted.