

Children: 10 days to complete reviews

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But state officials omitted that determination, as well as specific details about their past investigations into Secord's safety, from the report shown to the public.

Brenda McKune wonders if her grandson would still be alive, a junior in high school pursuing his goal of professional football or baseball, had child welfare workers investigated his near-death from alcohol poisoning.

"It could have saved his life," she said. "It may not have, but it could have."

Child fatality reviews serve two purposes: They uncover systemic problems that need to be corrected and hold the Department of Human Services accountable for missteps that end in tragedy.

The agency is highly secretive about the steps it takes to protect vulnerable children, in part to protect privacy. The fatality reports are one of the few, and perhaps most crucial, windows into an agency that has consistently failed to meet nearly every federal benchmark for child safety.

Officials are required to carry out the reviews quickly so the problems they find can be fixed to save other children like Secord.

The delayed, brief review of his death reflects a widespread pattern that has emerged over the past year and a half. Department of Human Services officials have failed to meet legal deadlines to report child deaths and, when they finally have published them, excluded significant facts about most of the children's lives.

The state didn't release a single fatality report for the first five months of this year. Since then, the department has made public just six summary reports. In five, the state concluded that the agency made no significant errors that contributed to the death. In all but one, more than a year had passed since the child had died.

Leaders of the Department of Human Services contend that changes to reporting requirements in 2017 give the agency an indefinite amount of time to make public the report of a child's death, as long as they are conducting an internal review. But state Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, who lobbied for the changes, said interpreting the law that way violates its spirit of transparency and its plain language.

"Without publishing those, there is no way for the public to know the department is following the statute," she said.

The agency posted two of the six summary reports, including the one on Secord's death, during the final two days of Oregon's contentious race for governor, and one more since then. Gov. Kate Brown drew criticism from her Republican challenger, state Rep. Knute Buehler, for failing to improve Oregon's child welfare system.

The governor's office said it did not ask the child welfare agency to delay reports highlighting the department's involvement in children's deaths.

Case after case of children dying or being left in foster homes where they were starved or abused made child welfare a central issue in the election. Turnover among case workers is high. The department completed just 11 percent of its child welfare investigations on time this summer, far short of the federal standard of 90 percent.

"I believe that children slip through the cracks of our social justice system, to the benefit of the financial interests of the state," Timothy Wood wrote on behalf of the estate of a McMinnville infant who died in 2016. It was once his job to help defend the Department of Human Services against such lawsuits, he wrote. Now retired, he works on behalf of surviving siblings.

By law, the Department of Human Services must complete an initial fatality review within 70 days after state officials learn neglect or abuse likely contributed to the death of a child. If the team assigned to look into a death can't finish its report on time, it must publicly disclose that it is reviewing the death and explain the delay. Review teams also must post updates or finalized reports every 30 days after that or explain why they need more time, state law says.

The public summary reports refer to children who die only by their initials and leave out their hometowns and other

just months before he died in April 2017.

Department of Human Services officials declined to answer all but two questions — about the 70-day deadline and the inaccurate dates — for this story, saying they would treat the bulk of the detailed questions provided to them Nov. 14 as a public records request. The Oregonian did not ask for any records when it sought explanations of department actions and inaction.

"The tragedy of a child's death is taken very seriously by the Department of Human Services," spokeswoman Laura McGinnis said.

Shining a light

Fatality reviews are meant to help prevent deaths of vulnerable Oregon children.

The process, formally known as critical incident response teams, started after the 2005 death of Karly Sheehan, a 3-year-old from Corvallis who child welfare workers left in a home where she was later killed. Lawmakers recognized the reviews as essential to saving more children like her.

Department of Human Services staff members carry out the reviews. The teams can also include doctors, police, judges or lawmakers appointed by the agency's director.

As recently as April 2017, reports that the teams produced detailed every interaction the agency had with a child or other member of their household. The reports concluded what, if anything, went wrong at each point and outlined preventive steps for the future.

In 2017, legislators gave the agency more time to complete the reviews. Officials now have 10 days, rather than 24 hours, to begin a review after they learn about a child's death that likely was caused by abuse or neglect.

Lawmakers also expanded the department's scope of responsibility to publicly report child deaths. Until then, officials did not have to review the deaths of children if a brother or sister, but not the child who died, had been the subject of a recent allegation of abuse.

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'IT COULD HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE. IT MAY NOT HAVE, BUT IT COULD HAVE'

Brenda McKune | grandmother to Trevor Secord who wonders if her grandson would still be alive if child welfare workers investigated his near-death from alcohol poisoning at 14

New leader, less transparency

Brown's pick to lead the agency, Fariborz Pakseresh, has pledged since taking over in September 2017 to bring about change. But transparency in reporting the agency's role in child deaths has lessened on his watch.

Delaying release of fatality reports can stymie wrongful death lawsuits brought on behalf of children killed after case workers knew they might be in peril. State law makes it extremely difficult to sue if families don't file a claim within a year after the child's death. But if they don't know about mistakes by the state until after that year is up, any claim could be derailed.

A former top civil attorney for the state wrote in a Nov. 16 court filing that large settlements both prompt lawmakers to press the agency for positive change and help pay for needed care for surviving siblings.

identifying details. The Oregonian independently determined which child's death each of the reports discusses, including the one on Secord's death.

Five of the six reviews issued this year falsely indicate they were made public earlier than they were and at least two withhold the agency's full case history with the families in question. The very small number of public reports also raises questions about how many abuse deaths have gone unacknowledged. The department, for example, has said nothing in the year since Paysience Adams was shot to death in her Douglas County foster home, nor has it acknowledged that it investigated allegations a Lane County teen was being abused

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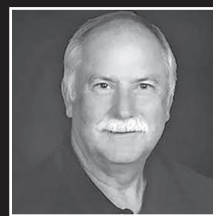


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THE DAILY ASTORIAN



TV SCHEDULE

Evening listings
WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY EVENING												NOVEMBER 28	
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
2	KATU	(2) KATU News at 6 (N)		Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel Fortune (N)	The Goldbergs (N)	Am.Housewife (N)	Modern Family (N)	Single Parents (N)	Million Little Thing "Fight or Flight" (N)		News (N)	(3:5) Jimmy Kimmel
3	KOMO	(4) KOMO 4 News (N)		Wheel Fortune (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	The Goldbergs (N)	Am.Housewife (N)	Modern Family (N)	Single Parents (N)	Million Little Thing "Fight or Flight" (N)		KOMO 4 News (N)	(3:5) Jimmy Kimmel
5	KING	(5) NBC News (N)	KING 5 News (N)	KING 5 News (N)	Evening	ChristmasRockefeller The lighting of the iconic tree in New York City. (N)				Legendary Christmas (N)		KING 5 News (N)	(3:5) Tonight Show
6	KOIN	(6) KOIN Local 6 (N)	Evening News (N)	Extra	Ent. Tonight (N)	Survivor: David vs. Goliath "Tribal Lines Are Blurred" (N)				Magnum P.I. "Death Is Only Temporary" (N)		News (N)	(3:5) Colbert (N)
7	KIRO	(7) KIRO 7 News (N)	Evening News (N)	KIRO 7 News (N)	Ent. Tonight (N)	Survivor: David vs. Goliath "Tribal Lines Are Blurred" (N)				Magnum P.I. "Death Is Only Temporary" (N)		KIRO 7 News (N)	(3:5) Colbert (N)
8	KGW	(8) KGW News at 6:00 p.m. (N)		Tonight Cassidy	Inside Edition	ChristmasRockefeller The lighting of the iconic tree in New York City. (N)				Legendary Christmas (N)		News (N)	(3:5) Tonight Show
9	KRCW	(9) Modern Family	Modern Family	The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs	Riverdale (N)	All American "The Choice Is Yours" (N)			News (N)	Friends	Two and a Half	Two and a Half
10	KOPB	(10) Journeys in Japan	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour (N)		Nature "Snow Bears" (N)				Fleetwood Mac: Dance	The most anticipated reunions of the decade.		FinancialSolutio
12	KPTV	(12) 6 O'Clock News (N)		Family Feud	Family Feud	Empire (N)		Star "Roots and Wings" (N)		10 O'Clock News (N)		News (N)	Page Six TV
13	KPDx	(13) Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Prime News (N)		Star "Roots and Wings" (N)		Big Bang Theory	Family Guy	American Dad!	The Game
13	KCPQ	(13) Modern Family	Modern Family	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Empire (N)		Star "Roots and Wings" (N)		Q13 NEWS AT 10 (N)		News (N)	The Simpsons
20	TBS	(20) Family Guy	Family Guy	Bob's Burgers	Bob's Burgers	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Conan Without Borders "Japan" (N)		Conan Without Borders	"Japan" (N)
22	KZJL	(22) Black-ish	Black-ish	Mom	Modern Family	Mom	Modern Family	Q13 News at 9 (N)		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Two and a Half	Two and a Half
29	ESPN	(29) (4:30) NCAA Basket.	NCAA Basketb. ACC/ Big-10 Challenge North Carolina (Chapel Hill) at Michigan (L)			SportsCenter (N)	SportsCenter With Scott Van Pelt (N)			SportsCenter (N)		Two and a Half	Two and a Half
30	ESPN2	(30) (1:15) NCAA Basketball	ACC/ Big-10 Challenge Purdue at Florida State (L)			(1:15) Valvano	NFL Live			Around the Horn	Interruption	First Take	
31	NICK	(31) The Loud House	The Loud House	The Loud House	Henry Danger	Henry Danger	SpongeBob	★ Legally Blonde '01, Com	Luke Wilson, Matthew Davis, Reese Witherspoon.			Friends	Friends
32	DISN	(32) Raven's Home	Stuck in Middle	Stuck in Middle	Stuck in Middle	Raven's Home	Raven's Home	Coop & Cami	Coop & Cami	Bunk'd	Bunk'd	Raven's Home	Raven's Home
34	FAM	(34) (4:00) Jumanji '95	(4:00) ★★ Despicable Me '10	Voices of Jason Segel, Russell Brand, Steve Carell.	(5:00) ★★ A Christmas Carol (2009, Animated)	Voices of Gary Oldman, Colin Firth, Jim Carrey.				The 700 Club			
35	FMC	(35) (5:45) ★★ Christmas With the Kranks '04	Tim Allen.	(4:00) Unfinished Business '15, Com	Dave Franco, Tom Wilkinson, Vince Vaughn.	★★★ Terminator: Genisys '15	Jason Clarke, Arnold Schwarzenegger.			(5:00) FXM Presents			
36	LIFE	(36) A Country Christmas Story '13, Dra	Megyn Price, Mary Kay Place, Desiree Ross.	The Christmas Contract '18, Dra	Robert Buckley, Dannael Ackles, Hilarie Burton.	(5:05) Tis the Season				(5:05) The Christmas Contract			
39	ROOT	(39) (5:30) Champions Tennis	Champions Cup	NCAA Basketball Valparaiso at UNLV (L)		Press Pass (N)				NCAA Football Washington at Washington State			
39	FS1	(39) (5:30) NCAA Basketball	Montana at Creighton (L)	The Ultimate Fighter (N)		UFC Tonight (N)				TMZ Sports (N)			
43	SPIKE	(43) Mom	★★ The Wedding Singer (1998, Comedy)	Drew Barrymore, Christine Taylor, Adam Sandler.		★★ The Waterboy (1998, Comedy)	Kathy Bates, Henry Winkler, Adam Sandler.			South Park (N)	BoJack (N)		
44	COM	(44) (1:15) South Park	(5:00) South Park	(2:25) South Park						Brothers in Arms			
45	HIST	(45) Vikings "A Simple Story"		Vikings "Moments of Vision"		Vikings "The Saga of Bjorn" (N)		Vikings "The Revelation" (N)		Storage Wars (N)	Storage Wars (N)		
46	A&E	(46) Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars (N)	Storage Wars (N)		
47	TLC	(47) Say Yes Dress	Say Yes Dress	My 600-lb Life "Marla's Story"		My 600-lb Life "James K's Story"				Family by the Ton "One Step at a Time"			
48	DISC	(48) Exp. Unknown "The Sultan's Heart"		Exp. Unknown "Finding Fenn's Fortune"		Exp. Unknown "The Real Robin Hood"		Expedition Unknown "Woolly Mammoth"		Josh searches for mammoth DNA.			
49	NGEO	(49) Peru "Strange Brew" (N)		Alaska State Troopers		Alaska State Troopers "NYPD to AST"		State Troop. "Doped and Disturbed" (N)		State Troop. "Hot Drugs, Icy Streets"			
50	TNT	(50) (5:30) ★★ X-Men: First Class '11	Michael Fassbender, James McAvoy.	(1:15) ★★ The Fifth Element (1997, Sci-Fi)	Milla Jovovich, Gary Oldman, Bruce Willis.	★★ Mission: Impossible III '06	Tom Cruise.						
51	AMC	(51) (4:30) Gremlins '84, Com	Zach Galligan.	★★★ National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (89)	Chevy Chase.	(1:15) ★★ National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (89)	Beverly D'Angelo, Randy Quaid, Chevy Chase.						
52	USA	(52) Chrissy Knows	Chrissy Knows	Chrissy Knows	Chrissy Knows	Chrissy Knows (N)	Chrissy Knows (N)	Real Country "American Spirit" (N)		Chrissy Knows	Chrissy Knows		
53	FOOD	(53) Guy's Grocery Games		Guy's Game "Salute to Firefighters"		Guy's Grocery Games "Pizza Masters"		Guy's Game "All-Seafood Battle" (N)		Property Brothers	Property Brothers		
54	HGTV	(54) Buying and Selling "Nashville Trade-In"		Buying and Selling		Property "Mistress of Her Domain"		Property Brothers (N)		House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)		
56	FX	(56) (5:00) ★★ Furious 7 (2015, Action)	Paul Walker, Jason Statham, Vin Diesel.	★★ Jason Bourne (2016, Action)	Julia Stiles, Alicia Vikander, Matt Damon.	★★ Jason Bourne (2016, Action)	Julia Stiles, Alicia Vikander, Matt Damon.			★★ Jason Bourne (2016, Action)	Julia Stiles, Matt Damon.		
57	CNN	(57) Cuomo Prime Time		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		Anderson Cooper 360		Cuomo Prime Time			
58	FNC	(58) Hannity		The Ingraham Angle		Fox News @ Night		Tucker Carlson Tonight		Hannity			
61	CNBC	(61) Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Paid Program			
63	BRV	(63) Wives NJ "Wives and Misdemeanors"		Wives NJ "Easter Egg Wives Hunt"		Wives NJ "The Jersey Breakfast Club"		Wives NJ "Housewives and Heifers" (N)		Wives Dallas "Reunion Part Two" (N)			
64	TCM	(64) (5:00) The Outlaw '43	Jane Russell.	(1:15) ★★ His Kind of Woman (1952, Crime Story)	Robert Mitchum, Vincent Price, Jane Russell.	(1:15) ★★ His Kind of Woman (1952, Crime Story)	Robert Mitchum, Vincent Price, Jane Russell.			Young Widow (1946, Drama)	Louis Hayward, Faith Domergue, Jane Russell.		
65	SYFY	(65) Movie	★★ The Sorcerer's Apprentice (2010, Action)	Alfred Molina, Jay Baruchel, Nicolas Cage.		★★ Bruce Almighty '03, Com/Dra	Morgan Freeman, Jennifer Aniston, Jim Carrey.			(5:05) The Family Man '01	Nicolas Cage.		
162	RFD	(162) Dude Ranch (N)	Cowboy (N)	W. Rodeo (N)	Equestrian Nation	Total Team Roping	Rural Eve. News	WesternSport	Cash Cowboys	Dude Ranch	Cowboy Moments		Product Showcase

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