Mohave County Attorney's Office

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MOHAVE COUNTY ATTORNEY ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATION OF CHILD ABUSE PURSUANT TO A.R.S. §8-817(B)(8)

Under A.R.S. §8-817(B)(8) there is a requirement that every County develop, adopt, and implement protocols to guide the investigations of allegations involving criminal conduct with respect to children. Please find attached a copy of the protocol that Mohave County has developed over the years, with this draft adopted in 2007.

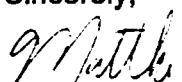
In the fiscal year starting July 1, 2015, and ending on June 30, 2016, Mohave County investigated 64 cases involving child abuse and 77 cases involving child sexual abuse. Of these 64 cases involving child abuse, there were 58 cases that were investigated jointly pursuant to our attached protocol. Those cases that were not investigated jointly involve three cases involving Aggravated DUI cases where a child was present in the vehicle and the other three cases involved child abuse that was not committed in the child victim's home. Of the 77 cases involving child sexual abuse, which includes sexual conduct with a minor, molestation of a child, and attempted offenses involving the same crimes, 60 of these cases were investigated jointly, and the majority of the remaining cases were not investigated jointly because the molestation or sexual abuse did not occur in the home and was not perpetrated by individuals living with the victim. Those cases where the victim and perpetrator lived together are cases that mandate CPS involvement. As stated in previous reports, CPS is only involved in cases where the child's family, parents or guardians are the potential perpetrators.

However, there were two cases where a joint investigation between law enforcement and CPS did not take place due to law enforcement not contacting CPS or being unable to contact CPS on the hotline in a timely manner. Law enforcement has continued to report over the years that they do tend to get frustrated with the CPS hotline, particularly when they are put on hold for an extended period of time. In these cases, law enforcement will generally leave a message but will not stay on the phone indefinitely. Ultimately, CPS did get contacted in these cases but were not involved in the initial investigation. We are still working on resolving these issues by having fairly regular MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team) that involve a local task force that is comprised of members of the Mohave County Attorney's Office, CPS and local law enforcement agencies. These issues can be resolved by everyone working together and continuing to communicate as often as possible.

Of these 64 child abuse cases presented for review, approximately 53 of them resulted in at least one criminal charge and 46 of these cases resulted in at least one conviction for a criminal offense for the current fiscal year. Of course some of those cases are still pending. Of the approximate 77 child sexual abuse cases presented to the County Attorney's Office for review, 65 of those cases resulted in criminal charges and 56 of those cases resulted in a criminal conviction for at least one criminal offense. Again, some of these cases are still pending and will not be resolved until the next fiscal year.

Please feel free to contact me at (928) 753-0719 if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Smith
Mohave County Attorney

Enclosure (Mohave County Children's Justice Task Force Protocol)

MJS/ns

cc:

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