ESCARS

The Future of Child Abuse Reporting and Investigation in California

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What is a SCAR?

Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR)
California Department of Justice form SS8572
Use is mandated throughout the state.
Guiding statutory scheme is

**CANRA**

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act
Penal Code § 11164 et. seq.
Poll Question #1

• Have you used an electronic form to report suspected child abuse?
Why?

“to prevent cases from falling through the cracks”

**CANRA**

- Penal Code § 11164 et. seq.

- California legislature requires Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to cross-report allegations of suspected child abuse to each other and the District Attorney
WHAT GETS REPORTED

- Child victim
- Perpetrator is ANY PERSON
- Following types of abuse must be reported:
  - Physical Abuse
  - Sexual Abuse
  - Neglect
  - Emotional Abuse
Poll Question #2

• Does CPS in your area cross-report out-of-home abuse reports?
WHAT IS ESCARS

- Launched in 2009
- Web-based application
- Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System
LA County envisioned, created and currently utilizes ESCARS, which facilitates the mandated duty to cross-report allegations of suspected child abuse between all affected agencies in order to be in compliance with CANRA (PC §11166(a)).

ESCARS assists in the elimination of errors and lengthy time delays that transpire when paper-based methods of reporting are employed, i.e., fax, mail, hand-sorting, etc.

ESCARS also expedites the secure electronic transmission and receipt of SCARs amongst all relevant agencies.
ESCARS PURPOSE

• Separate but parallel investigations
  ✓ ESCARS aids in parallel investigations by facilitating the transference of information between social workers and law enforcement
    ▪ Potentially minimizing fewer victim interviews, as well as, more timely communication between relevant agencies
  ✓ Provides an investigative tool for the victim and/or suspect
    ▪ In-Home and Out-of-Home Abuse
The benefits of ESCARS include, but are not limited to:

✓ Access to historical SCARs relating to either a victim/suspect from various jurisdictions within LA County
✓ Ability to monitor the progress and status of a SCAR
✓ Protect children by way of information sharing and teamwork

Documents agency cross-reporting

✓ Law Enforcement ↔ DCFS
✓ Penal Code §§ 11164(j) & (k)
Los Angeles County Average

56,000

Every SCAR is a potential victim or witness
THE BEST PREDICTOR OF FUTURE BEHAVIOR IS PAST BEHAVIOR
HISTORY OF SCARS
Poll Question #3

• Should CPS/Law Enforcement look at ESCAR History when evaluating a report of suspected child abuse?
SCAR HISTORY MAY PROVIDE

• Corroboration to your present case
• Additional victims
  ✓ Who could become witnesses to your present case

= more counts and higher sentences
• The impact of ESCARS on discovery investigation and prosecution of child abuse is exponentially significant when you consider how child abuse is perpetrated

• In an effort to prevent discovery of the abuse, abusers frequently:
  ✓ Go to different hospitals
  ✓ Change school districts
  ✓ Move residences
Poll Question #4

• Should Medical Child Protection teams have access to ESCARS?
Up close it looks like nothing......
From above it’s everything…

Reported allegations of child abuse will make it into ESCARS even if they wouldn’t appear on a RAP sheet.
“I told and no one helped me.”
And there was another…
• Officer would not have known of the prior history
• The initial victim would not have been re-interviewed
• The third victim would have gone undiscovered
• The suspect may not have been charged with multiple felony counts of abuse

This story may have had a different ending…
ELECTRONIC SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT SYSTEM

There are 4 unopened Child Fatality SCAR(s).

Agency Status

- **37** Critical / Fatal
- **66** Unopened
  - + 1 CPH Updated
- **1242** Pending
  - + 2 CPH Updated
- **122** LEA Generated
- **6** Forward Request Received
- **6** Forward Request Submitted

Submission, Transmission and Routing

- **4387** Submitted to eSCARS
  - + 18 CPH Updated
- **33** Forwarded SCARs Received
  - + 14 CPH Updated
- **3145** Transmitted
  - 1 Failed Transmission
  - + 2 CPH Updated
- **1267** LEA Generated
  - 13 Trans
  - 7 Not Trans
- **20** Sensitive

Agency Action

- **733** Crime Suspected
  - + 2 CPH Updated
- **701** Crime Suspected - Not Child Abuse
- **1259** No Crime Suspected
  - + 6 CPH Updated
- **269** No Investigation
  - + 2 CPH Updated
- **49** Forwarded SCARs

Rerouted SCARs

- **6** Missing Information
- **22** Wrong Agency
- **0** General Neglect
MULTIPLE SEARCH OPTIONS

- Search by:
  - SCAR number
  - LEA Report number
  - Victim Name with or without DOB
  - Victim’s Mother’s Name
  - Suspect Name with or without DOB
ESCARS IS WHERE YOUR MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM MEETS
Collapsible tabs for each discipline
EXPANSION OF ESCARS

- Fresno County
- Santa Barbara County
- Yolo County
- Sacramento County