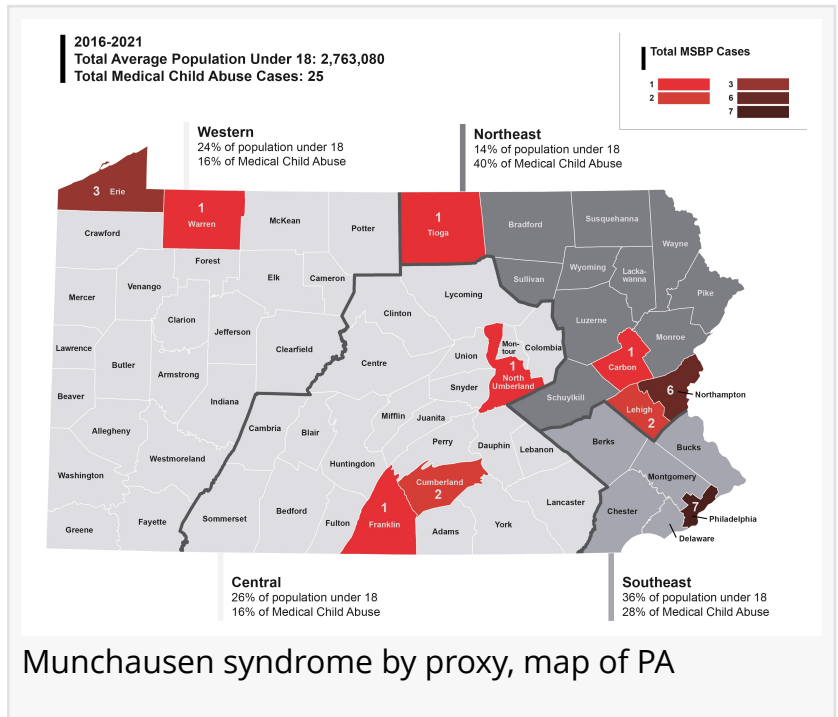


Lehigh County's High Medical Child Abuse Statistics: A Financial Concern

Controller's Concern: Lehigh County Grapples with the Cost of Misdiagnosis

ALLENTOWN, PA, USA, August 31, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Lehigh County Controller Mark Pinsley recently unveiled a concerning report highlighting a potential misdiagnosis trend of child abuse in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The report reveals an unsettling trend in the Northeast region: 40% of all Munchausen syndrome by proxy (MSBP) cases occur here, despite the region representing just 11% of the under-18 population. MSBP, a form of medical child abuse, involves a caregiver misleading a child into believing they are sick, often leading to unwarranted medical treatments. Scott Bailey, Ph.D., Chair and Professor of Psychology at Texas Lutheran University, commented on these findings:



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As schools resume, they are the primary source reporting child abuse. We urgently need measures to prevent abuse allegations from turning into misdiagnoses that devastate innocent families.”

Controller Pinsley

"Given the seriousness of child abuse and the rarity of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy, a deep dive into the high number of diagnoses in the Northeast region... seems not only justified but urgent."

"County Executive Armstrong and Commission Chair Brace have merely forwarded my report to DHS, a step I had already initiated. These potential misdiagnoses are tearing innocent families apart," Controller Pinsley remarked. "Our County leaders must take decisive action. Their ongoing inaction risks further wrongful child removals, immense family trauma, and unnecessary expenditure of taxpayer

dollars. It's high time for Executive Armstrong and Chair Brace to demonstrate decisive

leadership on this critical issue."

Pinsley estimates that Lehigh County incurs an average annual expense of over \$50,000 per child on foster care, legal representation, and services related to potential wrongful removals based on unsupported abuse diagnoses.

He also revealed the substantial influence child abuse pediatricians hold in separating families. Misdiagnosis can pit the entire system against innocent families, causing irreparable trauma. Over 30 individuals voiced their distressing experiences with this system during a Lehigh County board meeting.

Pinsley suggests several immediate remedies:

1. Mandate second medical opinions from external specialists before or immediately after removing children based on abuse claims.
2. Initiate an independent review of prior MSBP diagnoses and all practices by the County's Children and Youth Services by a highly respected institution.
3. Encourage local hospitals to reassess previous MSBP cases and other suspected abuse instances that might be confused with rare diseases mimicking child abuse.
4. Advocate for Governor Shapiro to draft an executive order restricting Childline, Pennsylvania's child abuse reporting tool, from designating parents as child abusers without a proper court judgment.

"We desperately need strategies to prevent potential misdiagnoses from dismantling innocent families," Pinsley asserted. "Executive Armstrong and Chairman Brace ought to champion the demand for secondary medical opinions and an immediate, comprehensive review of our child abuse processes."

Pinsley also encouraged County leaders to partner with the caseworkers' union, SEIU, ensuring staff involvement, fair treatment, and protection against undue allegations.

"The power to effect immediate change rests with the County government," Pinsley highlighted. "Strategic reforms can protect our children and prevent injustice to wrongly accused parents."

In conclusion, Pinsley stated, "I will keep a vigilant eye on how County leaders address this situation. Our community deserves and expects action."

If you believe you've been unjustly labeled as a child abuser, you're not alone. Reach out for support and assistance at <https://www.pmrglv.com>

The Cost of Misdiagnosis can be seen here:

https://www.lehighcounty.org/Portals/0/PDF/controller/General_Reports/NAS%2023-01%20The%20Cost%20of%20Diagnosis.pdf?ver=gQE9c6HkzRflcYvKNw8rFw%3d%3d

Texas law allows parents accused of abuse to get second medical opinions:

<https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2021/06/28/new-state-law-allows-parents-accused-of-abuse-to-request-second-medical-opinions/>

Take Care of Maya a documentary about misdiagnosis:

<https://youtu.be/xzAAPNIsxB0?si=ealLn3aYScAazw1R>

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