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Parents of malnourished child arraigned

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HOLDEN — A couple has been arraigned in Leominster District Court on charges of reckless endangerment of a child after their 2- year-old was evaluated at UMass in February and found to be malnourished.

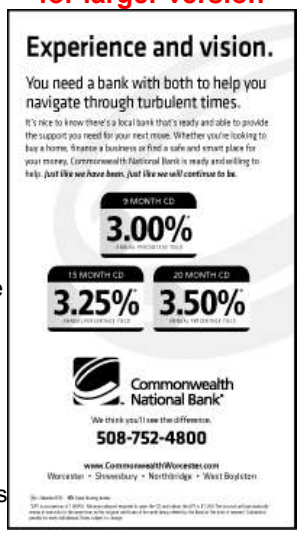
After hospitalization, the boy was removed to a foster home, where he remains. Court documents say the child has gained weight in foster care. Joshua J. and Kellie Theriault, both 34, of 1588 Main St., Holden, were arraigned after several months of uncertainty about their case, which was scheduled for a probable cause hearing last week. The couple was arraigned instead. The charge is a misdemeanor.

The case of their 2-year-old son began in February when an anonymous call to the state Department of Social Services tip line stated that the child had bruises. Investigating officers found him underweight; his parents said the bruises came when he was trying to get up from a sitting position.

The child's case was investigated by DSS, which removed him from the home. The siblings were found to be healthy. The 2-yearold boy was brought to UMass-University Campus and evaluated by Dr. Rebecca Moles, who said it was the worst case of child malnourishment she had ever seen. Moles said if he had not been removed from the home, he would have died.

The child weighed only 17 pounds when first evaluated; he gained 2.3 pounds during his first week out of his home. The police report says that he has also gained height and is improving in areas where he had delayed since being placed in special foster care.

The boy, who is now 3, had not seen a physician regularly. The police report states the parents said they didn't believe there was anything wrong. His primary care physician, Dr. William J. Blake of Holden, had ordered blood tests for the child in 2006 and in 2007, but the Theriaults never took the child to have the tests done.

A pretrial hearing is scheduled for Nov. 24 in Leominster District Court.

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