



Iowa Department of Human Services

Terry E. Branstad
Governor

Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer
Director

June 17, 2016

Newborn Girl Declared Safe Haven Baby

(Des Moines, Iowa) - Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) officials have used the state's safe haven procedures for the 26th time since the law went into effect.

A mother turned over care of a newborn girl at an Iowa hospital on June 7, 2016. The infant was released to the custody of the DHS. A court hearing to terminate parental rights will be held within a month. Specific details are withheld in order to protect the identity of the parents and child.

"We continue to see the safe haven law protecting the life and health of newborns," said Wendy Rickman, administrator of Adult, Children and Family Services at DHS. "This law also protects parents in crisis from prosecution for abandonment so that they may leave an infant at a hospital or health care facility, no questions asked."

Under Iowa's safe haven law, parents have the option to safely hand over custody of babies age 14 days or younger without fear of prosecution for abandonment. The parent, or their authorized representative, can leave the newborn at a hospital or health care facility, and can remain anonymous. The safe haven law was approved in the wake of a high-profile case in 2001 involving a teen mother in eastern Iowa who killed her home-delivered newborn.

Infants who are safe haven babies are placed with currently-approved foster or adoptive families. If you are interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent, please visit <https://www.iowakidsnet.com/>

For more information on the safe haven procedure: <http://dhs.iowa.gov/safe-haven>

Amy Lorentzen McCoy
515-281-4848
amccoy@dhs.state.ia.us