



March 23, 2016

Newborn Boy Declared Safe Haven Baby

(Des Moines, Iowa) - Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) officials have used the state's safe haven procedures for the 25th time since the law went into effect.

A baby boy was taken to an Iowa health care facility on March 8. Under Iowa's safe haven law, parents or a person acting with their authorization, can turn over custody of babies age 14 days or younger without fear of prosecution for abandonment. They can leave the newborn at a hospital or health care facility, and can remain anonymous.

"The law works by protecting parents - or a person acting on behalf of the parents - from prosecution for abandonment so that they may safely transfer custody of the child at a health care facility," said Wendy Rickman, administrator of Adult, Children and Family Services with DHS. "Iowa's law has allowed the safe transfer of custody and care of 25 infants."

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.

In safe haven cases, a court hearing is held within a month to terminate parental rights. Specific details are withheld in order to protect the identity of the parents and child.

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

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

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