



Iowa Department of Human Services

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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 24th time since the law went into effect.

A baby boy was born at an Iowa health care facility on January 23, 2016, and his mother asked to use the safe haven provision of Iowa law (hyperlink to <http://dhs.iowa.gov/safe-haven>).

The infant was released to the custody of the DHS. A court hearing will be held within a month to terminate parental rights. Specific details are withheld in order to protect the identity of the parents and child.

“This law can protect the life and health of an infant whose parents are in crisis or otherwise cannot care for them,” said Wendy Rickman, administrator of Adult, Children and Family Services with DHS. “The law works by protecting parents— or a person acting with the parents’ authorization – from prosecution for abandonment so that they may safely turn over care of the child at a health care facility.”

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 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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