



Aug. 20, 2014

Newborn Boy Declared Safe Haven Baby

(Des Moines, Iowa) - Iowa Department of Human Services officials are using the state's safe haven procedures for the 20th time since the law went into effect.

An individual brought a healthy newborn boy to a medical center in Iowa on Aug. 13 and asked that the child be declared a safe haven baby.

"Legislators put in place a no-questions-asked approach to protect newborns, and it continues to be used by parents in crisis who wish to safely hand over care," said DHS Director Charles M. Palmer.

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. In all previous cases, safe haven babies have been successfully adopted.

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.

For more information

<http://dhs.iowa.gov/safe-haven>

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