



Iowa Department of Human Services

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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 27th time since the law went into effect.

A newborn girl was born April 10, 2017, at an Iowa hospital and the infant was released the following day to the custody of the DHS. A court hearing to terminate parental rights is held within a month. Specific details are withheld in order to protect the identity of the parents and child.

"The life and health of newborns is protected under this important law," said Wendy Rickman, administrator of Adult, Children and Family Services at DHS. "Parents in crisis are also protected from prosecution for abandonment, allowing them to safely 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>

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