

1 SB427
2 129160-2
3 By Senators Figures, Coleman, Singleton, Irons, Sanders and
4 Smitherman
5 RFD: Health
6 First Read: 21-APR-11

1 SB427

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4 ENROLLED, An Act,

5 Relating to sudden unexplained infant death, to
6 provide for investigating suspected cases of sudden
7 unexplained infant death (SUID); to create the Alabama Sudden
8 Unexplained Infant Death Investigation Team; to provide for
9 its duties; to provide for the coordination of certain county
10 officials, law enforcement, and medical or emergency personnel
11 in investigating suspected cases of SUID; and to provide
12 certain persons and entities immunity from civil and criminal
13 liability under certain conditions.

14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

15 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited
16 as the Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigation Act.

17 Section 2. The Legislature finds and declares all
18 the following:

19 (1) Protection of the health and welfare of the
20 infants of this state is a goal of its people and the
21 unexpected or unexplained death of an infant is an important
22 public health concern that requires legislative action.

23 (2) Death scene investigations and findings thereof
24 can be particularly important in accurately diagnosing the
25 manners and causes of infant deaths.

1 (3) Collecting accurate data on the cause and manner
2 of unexpected infant deaths will better enable the state to
3 protect infants from preventable deaths and will help reduce
4 the incidence of infant deaths.

5 Section 3. For purposes of this act, the following
6 words shall have the following meanings:

7 (1) FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST. A pathologist trained or
8 with experience in forensic pathology, licensed to practice
9 medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine and surgery in
10 the State of Alabama and board certified by the American Board
11 of Pathology, or under the direct supervision of a physician
12 with these qualifications.

13 (2) INFANT DEATH. The sudden death of an person less
14 than one year of age whose death occurs outside the direct
15 care of a physician in a hospital or other health care
16 setting.

17 (3) SUDDEN UNEXPLAINED INFANT DEATH (SUID). The
18 sudden death of an infant less than one year of age whose
19 death occurs outside the direct care of a physician in a
20 hospital or other health care setting and whose cause of death
21 is not reasonably ascertainable after a thorough investigation
22 and examination by the person signing the death certificate.

23 Section 4. (a) There is established the Alabama
24 Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigation (SUIDI) Team
25 which for administrative purposes shall be organized within

1 the Department of Public Health as a subcommittee of the State
2 Child Death Review Team. The team is charged with the
3 development, maintenance, and provision of SUIDI training
4 curricula for the State of Alabama. The development and
5 approval of infant death investigation protocol and reporting
6 forms are not subject to the rule-making requirements of the
7 Administrative Procedure Act.

8 (b) In order to implement this act, the SUIDI Team
9 shall do all of the following:

10 (1) Establish infant death scene investigation
11 protocol.

12 (2) Develop and maintain the training standards,
13 policies, and procedures related to investigating and
14 reporting SUID in Alabama.

15 (3) Approve a standardized reporting form to be used
16 in conjunction with the above procedures.

17 Section 5. (a) An investigation shall be performed
18 utilizing protocol and forms approved by the Alabama Sudden
19 Unexplained Infant Death Investigation (SUIDI) Team in all
20 incidents of infant deaths.

21 (b) All law enforcement agencies within this state
22 are responsible to ensure that all personnel who investigate
23 infant deaths obtain training developed by the SUIDI Team on
24 investigation protocol and completing reporting forms.

1 (c) All elected and appointed coroners and deputy
2 coroners are responsible for obtaining training on
3 investigation protocol and completing reporting forms in cases
4 of infant deaths.

5 (d) The training, which shall be developed by the
6 SUIDI Team, shall include a focus on the importance of being
7 sensitive to the grief of family members and shall be
8 consistent with the death scene investigation protocol
9 approved by the SUIDI Team.

10 (e) The Alabama Department of Public Health shall be
11 responsible for developing a team of trainers to provide
12 infant death investigation training to law enforcement
13 personnel, as well as coroners and deputy coroners.

14 (f) The Alabama Department of Public Health shall be
15 responsible for disseminating infant death investigation
16 protocol and reporting forms to the various law enforcement
17 associations and the Alabama Coroner's Association within the
18 state which shall in turn disseminate the protocol and
19 reporting forms to the respective law enforcement agencies and
20 coroners in this state.

21 (g) When changes occur in protocol pertaining to
22 SUID investigations, the Alabama Department of Public Health
23 shall promptly notify various law enforcement associations and
24 the Alabama Coroner's Association within the state. The
25 changes shall then be communicated in a timely manner to the

1 respective law enforcement agencies and coroners for
2 dissemination to their enforcement personnel.

3 Section 6. (a) In every case of SUID, the county
4 coroner or medical examiner shall be notified and cooperate
5 and assist law enforcement with the death investigation.

6 (b) The county coroner or medical examiner shall
7 obtain legal authorization to send the infant to a forensic
8 pathologist for examination.

9 (c) The county coroner or medical examiner shall
10 contact the appropriate law enforcement personnel to conduct a
11 death investigation according to the protocol developed by the
12 SUIDI Team. The investigation shall be initiated within 24
13 hours of the time the appropriate law enforcement personnel is
14 contacted.

15 (d) The county coroner or medical examiner shall
16 send a copy of the SUIDI Team approved investigative form to
17 the forensic pathologist conducting the autopsy.

18 Section 7. This act shall become effective on the
19 first day of the sixth month following its passage and
20 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

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President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Representatives

SB427
Senate 31-MAY-11
I hereby certify that the within Act originated in and passed
the Senate.

Patrick Harris
Secretary

House of Representatives
Passed: 09-JUN-11

By: Senator Figures