

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2015

S

1

SENATE BILL 598

Short Title: Reporting of Substance-Exposed Newborns. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators D. Davis, Pate, B. Jackson (Primary Sponsors); and Hartsell.

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

March 30, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE USE OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES, POLICIES REGARDING APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING THE REPORTING OF SUBSTANCE-EXPOSED NEWBORNS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Article 3 of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 7B-300A. Reporting of substance-exposed newborns.**

(a) The General Assembly recognizes that there are instances when children are born having been exposed to addictive substances and that such situations may require a child protective services social worker to approach the situation with certain sensitivities and a level of awareness of this special population of children. For purposes of this section, "special population" refers to children who are at greater risk because of various physical, emotional, cultural, or environmental factors that make children more vulnerable to abuse or less able to communicate their fears.

(b) To that end, county departments of social services shall use the policies developed from time to time by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, regarding the development of protection plans for substance-exposed newborns and the conduct of child protective services assessments of those newborns, when based on various factors, an assessment is warranted. Further, pursuant to the policies set forth by the Division, county departments of social services shall use the structured decision-making tools and family services agreements throughout the life of substance-exposed newborn cases to ensure the well-being of the newborn and a safe living environment for the newborn, as well as address any other issues regarding the newborn, including, but not limited to, (i) the need for medical care appointments, (ii) access and cooperation with health care resources, (iii) the parent's participation in substance abuse treatment, (iv) the need for routine substance abuse screenings, and (v) visitation planning if the child is placed out of the home."

**SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.

