

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

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HOUSE BILL 814
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/27/15

Short Title: The William C. Lindley, Jr. SUDEP Law.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 15, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT REQUIRING THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER TO ESTABLISH A MEDICAL EXAMINER TRAINING PROGRAM THAT INCLUDES TRAINING REGARDING SUDDEN UNEXPLAINED DEATH IN EPILEPSY DURING MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATIONS.

Whereas, sudden, unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP) is a mysterious, rare condition in which typically young or middle-aged individuals with epilepsy die without a clear cause, and is generally defined by the medical community as a sudden, unexpected, nontraumatic, nondrowning death in an otherwise healthy individual with epilepsy, where the postmortem examination does not reveal an anatomic or toxicologic cause of the death; and

Whereas, SUDEP is believed to account for up to 17 percent of deaths in individuals with epilepsy; and

Whereas, autopsy plays a key role in determining the diagnosis of SUDEP, yet the Institute of Medicine has found that SUDEP may be underreported for several reasons, including, but not limited to, a lack of awareness about SUDEP among medical examiners; and

Whereas, the cause of SUDEP is not known, and opportunities for its prevention have been hindered by the lack of a systematic effort to collect information about individuals who have died from SUDEP, as is done with many other disorders; and

Whereas, it is appropriate to raise awareness of SUDEP among medical examiners by developing a SUDEP awareness program and by facilitating research into the causes and prevention of SUDEP; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 130A-382 reads as rewritten:

"§ 130A-382. **County medical examiners; appointment; term of office; ~~vacancies~~vacancies; training requirements; revocation for cause.**

(a) The Chief Medical Examiner shall appoint one or more county medical examiners for each county for a three-year term. In appointing medical examiners for each county, the Chief Medical Examiner shall give preference to physicians licensed to practice medicine in this State but may also appoint licensed physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, ~~emergency medical technicians~~ or emergency medical technician paramedics. A medical examiner may serve more than one county. The Chief Medical Examiner may take jurisdiction in any case or appoint another medical examiner to do so.

(b) County medical examiners shall complete annual continuing education training that shall include training regarding sudden unexplained death in epilepsy, as directed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and based on established and published guidelines. Guidelines shall be published and annually updated on the Web site of the Office of the Chief Medical



1 Examiner. Newly appointed county medical examiners shall complete mandatory orientation
2 training as directed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner within 90 days of their
3 appointment.

4 (c) The Chief Medical Examiner may revoke a county medical examiner's appointment
5 for failure to adequately perform the duties of the office after giving written notice of the basis
6 for the revocation and opportunity to respond."

7 **SECTION 2.** This section becomes effective January 1, 2016.