

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

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT REQUIRING THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER TO ESTABLISH A MEDICAL
3 EXAMINER TRAINING PROGRAM THAT INCLUDES TRAINING REGARDING
4 SUDDEN UNEXPLAINED DEATH IN EPILEPSY DURING MEDICOLEGAL DEATH
5 INVESTIGATIONS.

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

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

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

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

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

22 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

24 "§ 130A-382. County medical examiners; appointment; term of office;
25 ~~vacancies~~vacancies; training requirements; revocation for cause.

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

33 (b) County medical examiners shall complete annual continuing education training that
34 shall include training regarding sudden unexplained death in epilepsy, as directed by the Office
35 of the Chief Medical Examiner and based on established and published guidelines. Guidelines
36 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.