

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

SESSION LAW 2015-211
HOUSE BILL 814

AN ACT REQUIRING THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER TO ESTABLISH A MEDICAL EXAMINER TRAINING PROGRAM THAT INCLUDES TRAINING REGARDING SUDDEN UNEXPECTED 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~~ two 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, ~~coroners~~, 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 continuing education training as directed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and based upon established and published guidelines for conducting death investigations. The continuing education training shall include training regarding sudden unexpected death in epilepsy. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner shall annually update and publish these guidelines on its Internet Web site. Newly appointed county medical examiners shall complete mandatory orientation training as directed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner within 90 days of their appointment.

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



SECTION 2. This act becomes effective January 1, 2016.
In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 4th day of August,
2015.

s/ Daniel J. Forest
President of the Senate

s/ Tim Moore
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Pat McCrory
Governor

Approved 1:34 p.m. this 11th day of August, 2015