



Missouri Safe Haven Readiness Guide

Under Missouri Statute 210.950 “ Safe Place for Newborns Act of 2002” pregnancy resource centers and maternity homes on duty staff were added in 2014 as official “safe haven” locations along with hospitals, on duty law enforcement or on duty fire and emergency medical personnel. Go to this link <http://mchc.net/pdfs/SB256.pdf> for a copy of the actual Senate Bill 256.

Definitions:

The following are the definitions of a pregnancy resource center, maternity home, relinquishing parent and hospital as defined by the state of Missouri statutes:

Pregnancy resource center as defined in section 135.630 – a non-residential facility located in Missouri:

- (a) Established and operating primarily to provide assistance to women with crisis pregnancies or unplanned pregnancies by offering pregnancy testing, counseling, emotional and material support, and other similar services to encourage and assist such women in carrying their pregnancies to term; and
- (b) Where childbirths are not performed; and
- (c) Which does not perform, induce, or refer for abortions and which does not hold itself out as performing, inducing, or referring for abortions; and
- (d) Which provides direct client services at the facility, as opposed to merely providing counseling or referral services by telephone; and
- (e) Which provides its services at no cost to its clients; and
- (f) When providing medical services, such medical services must be performed in accordance with Missouri statute; and
- (g) Which is exempt from income taxation pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

Maternity home as defined in section 135.600 –a residential facility located in this state established for the purpose of providing housing and assistance to pregnant women who are carrying their pregnancies to term, and which is exempt from income taxation under the United States Internal Revenue Code;

Relinquishing parent, the biological parent or person acting on such parent's behalf who leaves a newborn infant with any person listed above and in accordance with the provisions of the statute.

Hospital as defined in section 197.020 - means a place devoted primarily to the maintenance and operation of facilities for the diagnosis, treatment or care for not less than twenty-four consecutive hours in any week of three or more nonrelated individuals suffering from illness, disease, injury, deformity or other abnormal physical conditions; or a place devoted primarily to provide for not less than twenty-four consecutive hours in any week medical or nursing care for three or more nonrelated individuals. The term "hospital" does not include convalescent, nursing, shelter or boarding homes as defined in chapter 198.

Statute Mandates:

- Infant can be relinquished up to 45 days old without prosecution.
- Can be relinquished if not been abused or neglected when relinquished.
- Relinquishing parent is not required to provide any identifying information.
- Agencies cannot induce or coerce or attempt to induce or coerce the parent into revealing his or her identity.
- Should identifying information be obtained on the relinquishing parent, it can only be disclosed to the following:
 - (a) A birth parent who has waived anonymity or the child's adoptive parent;
 - (b) The staff of the department of health and senior services, the department of social services, or any county health or social services agency or licensed child welfare agency that provides services to the child;
 - (c) A person performing juvenile court intake or dispositional services;
 - (d) The attending physician;
 - (e) The child's foster parent or any other person who has physical custody of the child;
 - (f) A juvenile court or other court of competent jurisdiction conducting proceedings relating to the child;
 - (g) The attorney representing the interests of the public in proceedings relating to the child; and
 - (h) The attorney representing the interests of the child.
- Arrange for immediate transport to a local hospital as defined in section 197.020.
- The “safe haven” is immune of liability. The persons listed above shall be immune from civil, criminal, and administrative liability for accepting physical custody of a child pursuant to this section if such persons accept custody in good faith. Such immunity shall not extend to any acts or omissions, including negligent or intentional acts or omissions, occurring after the acceptance of such child.

FAQs:

1. *Can we feed or diaper the baby if needed?*

Yes. You are permitted to attend to the immediate needs of the baby while waiting for the arrival of the hospital transport.

2. *Should we transport the baby to the hospital?*

No. A call should be placed immediately to the hospital and/or law enforcement for transport

3. *Can a “relinquishing parent” get custody back after relinquishment?*

Yes. However, they will be required to establish parentage within 30 days of relinquishment.

4. *What happens if the “relinquishing parent” returns prior to or after the transport of the baby to the hospital wanting to reclaim the baby?*

They should be instructed to contact hospital officials where the baby will be or has been transported.

United Way 2-1-1

United Way of Missouri has a database of referrals that can be accessed by dialing 2-1-1.

As a pregnancy resource center or maternity home, you should check to make sure that you are listed with them. In the Kansas City area, this number is publicized on the “Safe Haven” promotional materials/signs for easy access by an individual who may be considering relinquishing their baby. It is also used for individuals to find community resources so it would be a good idea to be listed. They will have your scope of services and contact information. Make sure to indicate that you are a “Safe Haven”.

Kansas City United Way includes 16 counties in the greater KC area. Those counties include: Andrew, Bates, Buchanan, Caldwell, Cass, Clay, Clinton, DeKalb, Henry, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, Platte, Ray, and Saline.

If you are not already in their database, contact United Way of Greater Kansas City: 816-472-4289.

All other counties in Missouri are included in the United Way of Missouri (St. Louis).

Get registered by completing an application found on their webpage:

<http://www.211helps.org/agency/get-listed> or call: 314-242-1880.

IF you are already registered you may want to call and check to be sure that you all your information is correct and that you are now listed as a “Safe Haven”.

Resources

Mother and Child Health Coalition of Kansas City – http://mchc.net/programs/safe_havens.aspx

- Sample - “Getting Help” letter
- Sample – Medical History Questionnaire for infant
- Sample – Pocket card pdf
- Sample – Poster pdf

National Safe Haven Alliance: <http://www.nationalsafehavenalliance.org/states>