

**Sixty-fifth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota  
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 3, 2017**

SENATE BILL NO. 2251  
(Senators Poolman, Armstrong, Myrdal)  
(Representatives Roers Jones, Rohr)

AN ACT to create and enact two new sections to chapter 50-25.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to substance exposed newborns; and to amend and reenact sections 50-25.1-02, 50-25.1-05, 50-25.1-06.1, and 50-25.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to substance exposed newborns.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 50-25.1-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**50-25.1-02. Definitions.**

In this chapter, unless the context or subject matter otherwise requires:

1. "A person responsible for the child's welfare" means ~~a person~~ an individual who has responsibility for the care or supervision of a child and who is the child's parent, an adult family member of the child, any member of the child's household, the child's guardian, or the child's foster parent; or an employee of, or any person providing care for the child in, a public or private school or child care setting.
2. "Abuse of alcohol", "alcohol abuse", or "abused alcohol" means alcohol abuse or dependence as defined in the current edition of the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" published by the American psychiatric association or a maladaptive use of alcohol with negative medical, sociological, occupational, or familial effects.
3. "Abused child" means an individual under the age of eighteen years who is suffering from abuse as defined in section 14-09-22 caused by a person responsible for the child's welfare and "sexually abused child" means an individual under the age of eighteen years who is subjected by a person responsible for the child's welfare, or by any individual who acts in violation of sections 12.1-20-01 through 12.1-20-07, sections 12.1-20-11 through 12.1-20-12.2, or chapter 12.1-27.2.
4. "Alternative response assessment" means a child protection response involving substance exposed newborns which is designed to:
  - a. Provide referral services to and monitor support services for a person responsible for the child's welfare and the substance exposed newborn; and
  - b. Develop a plan of safe care for the substance exposed newborn.
5. "Assessment" means a factfinding process designed to provide information that enables a determination to be made that services are required to provide for the protection and treatment of an abused or neglected child.
- 5-6. "Authorized agent" means the county social service board, unless another entity is designated by the department.
- 6-7. "Children's advocacy center" means a full or associate member of the national children's alliance which assists in the coordination of the investigation in response to allegations of child abuse by providing a dedicated child-friendly location at which to conduct forensic interviews,

forensic medical examinations, and other appropriate services and which promotes a comprehensive multidisciplinary team response to allegations of child abuse. The team response may include forensic interviews, forensic medical examinations, mental health and related support services, advocacy, and case review.

- ~~7-8.~~ "Citizen review committee" means a committee appointed by the department to review the department's provision of child welfare services.
- ~~8-9.~~ "Department" means the department of human services or its designee.
- ~~9-10.~~ "Institutional child abuse or neglect" means situations of known or suspected child abuse or neglect when the institution responsible for the child's welfare is a residential child care facility, a treatment or care center for individuals with intellectual disabilities, a public or private residential educational facility, a maternity home, or any residential facility owned or managed by the state or a political subdivision of the state.
- ~~10-11.~~ "Local child protection team" means a multidisciplinary team consisting of the designee of the director of the regional human service center, together with such other representatives as that director might select for the team with the consent of the director of the county social service board. All team members, at the time of their selection and thereafter, must be staff members of the public or private agencies they represent or shall serve without remuneration. An attorney member of the child protection team may not be appointed to represent the child or the parents at any subsequent court proceeding nor may the child protection team be composed of fewer than three members. The department shall coordinate the organization of local child protection teams on a county or multicounty basis.
- ~~11-12.~~ "Near death" means an act which, as certified by a physician, places a child in serious or critical condition.
- ~~12-13.~~ "Neglected child" means a deprived child as defined in chapter 27-20.
- ~~13-14.~~ "Prenatal exposure to a controlled substance" means use of a controlled substance as defined in chapter 19-03.1 by a pregnant woman for a nonmedical purpose during pregnancy as evidenced by withdrawal symptoms in the child at birth, results of a toxicology test performed on the mother at delivery of the child at birth, or medical effects or developmental delays during the child's first year of life that medically indicate prenatal exposure to a controlled substance.
- ~~14-15.~~ "Protective services" includes services performed after an assessment of a report of child abuse or neglect has been conducted, such as social assessment, service planning, implementation of service plans, treatment services, referral services, coordination with referral sources, progress assessment, monitoring service delivery, and direct services.
- ~~15-16.~~ "State child protection team" means a multidisciplinary team consisting of the designee of the department and, where possible, of a physician, a representative of a child-placing agency, a representative of the state department of health, a representative of the attorney general, a representative of the superintendent of public instruction, a representative of the department of corrections and rehabilitation, one or more representatives of the lay community, and, as an ad hoc member, the designee of the chief executive official of any institution named in a report of institutional abuse or neglect. All team members, at the time of their selection and thereafter, must be staff members of the public or private agency they represent or shall serve without remuneration. An attorney member of the child protection team may not be appointed to represent the child or the parents at any subsequent court proceeding nor may the child protection team be composed of fewer than three persons.
17. "Substance exposed newborn" means an infant younger than twenty-eight days of age at the time of the initial report of child abuse or neglect and who is identified as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms or by a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

**SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 50-25.1-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**50-25.1-05. Assessment - Alternative response assessment.**

1. The department, in accordance with rules adopted by the department, immediately shall initiate an assessment; or alternative response assessment or cause an assessment, of any report of child abuse or neglect including, when appropriate, the assessment or alternative response assessment of the home or the residence of the child, any school or child care facility attended by the child, and the circumstances surrounding the report of abuse or neglect.
2. According to guidelines developed by the department, the department may initiate an alternative response assessment if the department determines initiation is appropriate.
3. If the report alleges a violation of a criminal statute involving sexual or physical abuse, the department and an appropriate law enforcement agency shall coordinate the planning and execution of their investigation efforts to avoid a duplication of factfinding efforts and multiple interviews. The department or the law enforcement agency may:
  - a. Refer the case to a children's advocacy center for a forensic interview, forensic medical examination, and other services.
  - b. Interview, without the consent of a person responsible for the child's welfare, the alleged abused or neglected child and any other child who currently resides or who has resided with the person responsible for the child's welfare or the alleged perpetrator.
  - c. Conduct the interview at a school, child care facility, or any other place where the alleged abused or neglected child or other child is found.
- ~~3-4.~~ Except as prohibited under title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, part 2, a regional human service center shall disclose to the department or the department's authorized agent, upon request, the records of a patient or client which are relevant to an assessment of reported child abuse or neglect.
- ~~4-5.~~ The department shall adopt guidelines for case referrals to a children's advocacy center. When cases are referred to a children's advocacy center, all interviews of the alleged abused or neglected child conducted at the children's advocacy center under this section shall be audio-recorded or video-recorded.

**SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 50-25.1-06.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**50-25.1-06.1. Caseload standards - Reimbursement.**

The department shall adopt caseload standards establishing minimum staff-to-client ratios for the assessment and alternative response assessment of reports of child abuse or neglect and the provision of protective services. Within the limits of legislative appropriation, the department shall reimburse its authorized agent, upon claim being made by the authorized agent, for seventy-five percent of additional staff costs caused by the imposition of such caseload standards. Upon a determination that legislative appropriations are insufficient to reimburse each claiming authorized agent in the amount of seventy-five percent of such additional staff costs, the department shall reimburse each claiming authorized agent for that percentage of additional staff costs which the appropriation is sufficient to defray.

**SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 50-25.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**50-25.1-09. Immunity from liability.**

Any person, other than the alleged violator, participating in good faith in the making of a report, assisting in an investigation ~~or, assisting in an assessment, assisting in an alternative response assessment,~~ furnishing information, or in providing protective services under this chapter or who is a member of the child fatality review panel, is immune from any liability, civil or criminal, except for criminal liability as provided by section 50-25.1-13, that otherwise might result from reporting the alleged case of abuse, neglect, or death resulting from child abuse or neglect. For the purpose of any proceeding, civil or criminal, the good faith of any person required to report cases of child abuse, neglect, or death resulting from abuse or neglect must be presumed.

**SECTION 5.** A new section to chapter 50-25.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**Alternative response assessment - Compliance.**

If an alternative response assessment is initiated as a result of a report of child abuse or neglect, a decision that services are required may not be made if the person responsible for the child's welfare complies with the resulting referred services and plan of safe care for the substance exposed newborn. The department shall determine whether a person responsible for the child's welfare has complied with the referred services and plan of safe care for the substance exposed newborn. If the department determines a person responsible for the child's welfare has not complied with the referred services and plan of safe care for the substance abuse newborn, an assessment of the initial report of child abuse or neglect may be completed.

**SECTION 6.** A new section to chapter 50-25.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**Alternative response assessment - Services.**

1. In response to an alternative response assessment, the department:
  - a. Shall provide referral services to, and monitor support services for, the person responsible for the child's welfare, the substance exposed newborn, and other children under the same care as may be necessary for their well-being;
  - b. Shall develop a plan of safe care for the substance exposed newborn; and
  - c. May take any appropriate action under chapter 25-03.1.
2. The department may discharge the powers and duties provided under this section through an authorized agent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

This certifies that the within bill originated in the Senate of the Sixty-fifth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as Senate Bill No. 2251.

Senate Vote:    Yeas 46            Nays 0            Absent 1

House Vote:    Yeas 84            Nays 9            Absent 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

Received by the Governor at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

Approved at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Filed in this office this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2017,

at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of State