

Second Regular Session
Seventy-first General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 18-1132.01 Bob Lackner x4350

SENATE BILL 18-223

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Gardner, Coram, Fenberg, Fields

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Gray and Carver, Benavidez

Senate Committees

Judiciary

House Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH AN AUTOPSY
102 REPORT PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF A
103 MINOR MAY BE RELEASED TO CERTAIN PARTIES.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill specifies that an autopsy report prepared in connection with the death of a minor is confidential and may be disclosed by the county coroner to any other person or entity only in accordance with certain exceptions.

Under the bill, the coroner or his or her designee may only provide

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

a copy of the autopsy report prepared in connection with the death of a minor to:

- ! A parent or legal guardian of the deceased if the parent or legal guardian submits a copy of a written request to the coroner for a copy of the report in addition to an affidavit, signed by the parent or legal guardian under the penalty of perjury, verifying his or her relationship to the decedent;
- ! A law enforcement or criminal justice agency, including a district attorney, that is either investigating the death or prosecuting a criminal violation arising out of the death upon the request of the law enforcement or criminal justice agency;
- ! A requesting party in a civil case where the moving party demonstrates to the court that the autopsy report is discoverable in accordance with the Colorado rules of civil procedure, upon the entry of a specific order of the court authorizing disclosure of the autopsy report, and in accordance with any protective order necessary to limit disclosure of the identity of the deceased and other identifying personal information;
- ! Counsel for the defendant or the respondent for discovery purposes in a criminal case upon the entry of a specific order of the court authorizing disclosure of the autopsy report in accordance with the relevant rules of criminal procedure;
- ! A law enforcement agency that is investigating the death upon the request of the law enforcement agency;
- ! A local or regional child fatality prevention review team upon the request of the review team; or
- ! The Colorado department of public health and environment as necessary for the collection of data in accordance with the Colorado violent death reporting system.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 30-10-606.7 as
3 follows:

4 **30-10-606.7. Autopsy reports - death of a minor - confidential**
5 **- exceptions - definitions.** (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE
6 CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

7 (a) "AUTOPSY REPORT" MEANS THE REPORT OF THE CORONER OR

1 THE CORONER'S DESIGNEE ON THE POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION OF A
2 DECEASED INDIVIDUAL TO DETERMINE THE CAUSE OR MANNER OF DEATH,
3 INCLUDING ANY WRITTEN ANALYSIS, DIAGRAM, PHOTOGRAPH, OR
4 TOXICOLOGICAL TEST RESULTS. "AUTOPSY REPORT" ALSO INCLUDES ANY
5 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS, WORKING PAPERS, AND NOTES PREPARED BY THE
6 CORONER IN CONNECTION WITH THE REPORT.

7 (b) "MINOR" MEANS A PERSON UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN
8 YEARS.

9 (2) (a) NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW, AN
10 AUTOPSY REPORT PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF A MINOR
11 IS CONFIDENTIAL AND MAY BE DISCLOSED BY THE CORONER TO ANY OTHER
12 PERSON OR ENTITY ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF
13 THIS SECTION.

14 (b) THE CORONER OR HIS OR HER DESIGNEE MAY ONLY PROVIDE A
15 COPY OF THE AUTOPSY REPORT PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH THE
16 DEATH OF A MINOR TO:

17 (I) A PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF THE DECEASED IF THE
18 PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN SUBMITS A COPY OF A WRITTEN REQUEST TO
19 THE CORONER FOR A COPY OF THE REPORT IN ADDITION TO AN AFFIDAVIT,
20 SIGNED BY THE PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN UNDER THE PENALTY OF
21 PERJURY, VERIFYING HIS OR HER RELATIONSHIP TO THE DECEDENT;

22 (II) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OR CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCY,
23 INCLUDING A DISTRICT ATTORNEY, THAT IS EITHER INVESTIGATING THE
24 DEATH OR PROSECUTING A CRIMINAL VIOLATION ARISING OUT OF THE
25 DEATH UPON THE REQUEST OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OR CRIMINAL
26 JUSTICE AGENCY;

27 (III) A REQUESTING PARTY IN A CIVIL CASE WHERE THE MOVING

1 PARTY DEMONSTRATES TO THE COURT THAT THE AUTOPSY REPORT IS
2 DISCOVERABLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 26 (b)(1) OF THE COLORADO
3 RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE, UPON THE ENTRY OF A SPECIFIC ORDER OF THE
4 COURT AUTHORIZING DISCLOSURE OF THE AUTOPSY REPORT, AND IN
5 ACCORDANCE WITH ANY PROTECTIVE ORDER NECESSARY TO LIMIT
6 DISCLOSURE OF THE IDENTITY OF THE DECEASED AND OTHER IDENTIFYING
7 PERSONAL INFORMATION;

8 (IV) COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENDANT OR THE RESPONDENT FOR
9 DISCOVERY PURPOSES IN A CRIMINAL CASE UPON THE ENTRY OF A SPECIFIC
10 ORDER OF THE COURT AUTHORIZING DISCLOSURE OF THE AUTOPSY REPORT
11 IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 16 OF THE COLORADO RULES OF CRIMINAL
12 PROCEDURE;

13 (V) A LOCAL OR REGIONAL CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION REVIEW
14 TEAM ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 25-20.5-404 UPON THE
15 REQUEST OF THE REVIEW TEAM; OR

16 (VI) THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND
17 ENVIRONMENT AS NECESSARY FOR THE COLLECTION OF DATA IN
18 ACCORDANCE WITH THE COLORADO VIOLENT DEATH REPORTING SYSTEM.

19 **SECTION 2. Effective date - applicability.** This act takes effect
20 July 1, 2018, and applies to a request for an autopsy report submitted on
21 or after said date.

22 **SECTION 3. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,
23 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
24 preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.