**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 63‑7‑310, AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT, SO AS TO REQUIRE REPORTING WHEN AN INFANT OR FETUS IS EXPOSED TO ALCOHOL OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES.

Whereas, the purpose of this legislation is to address the problem of infants born affected by drugs and alcohol in South Carolina and to clarify the circumstances under which health professionals are to report fetal and infant substance exposure to the South Carolina Department of Social Services so the department can provide services or referrals for services to mothers with substance use disorders and infants born affected by substances; and

Whereas, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) of 2016, an amendment to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), aims to address the problem of infants born affected by substance use disorder, particularly opioid use disorder. The law requires each state to develop plans of safe care for infants affected by substance abuse; and

Whereas, the Administration for Children and Families has stated that to comply with the law “the state must have statewide laws, policies and/or procedures requiring health care providers involved in the delivery or care of infants born and identified as affected by substance abuse, withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder to notify the state’s child protective services of the occurrence of such conditions of infants.” Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 63‑7‑310 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 227 of 2010, is further amended by adding an appropriately lettered subsection at the end to read:

“( ) Every physician, nurse, or any other medical or allied health professional shall report to the department:

(1) a child birth to one year who is diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome or a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder;

(2) a child birth to one year who is affected by the presence of alcohol or a nonprescribed controlled substance or illegal substance or by withdrawal from alcohol or a controlled or illegal substance; or

(3) a woman who is pregnant and who has been diagnosed with an alcohol or other substance use disorder where the woman is not cooperating with an established treatment plan.

A report pursuant to this subsection must be made regardless of whether or not the alcohol or substance exposure constitutes child abuse or neglect as defined in Section 63‑7‑20.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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