

Senate Bill 348

By: Senators Williams of the 25th, Watson of the 1st, Kirkpatrick of the 32nd, Anderson of the 24th, Walker III of the 20th and others

AS PASSED

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 45-16-24 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 notification of suspicious or unusual deaths, court ordered medical examiner's inquiry, and
3 written report of inquiry, so as to revise the period for which an individual had not been seen
4 by a physician prior to death to be considered an unattended death; to provide that deaths in
5 long-term care facilities under certain circumstances shall not be considered unattended
6 deaths; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Code Section 45-16-24 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to notification
10 of suspicious or unusual deaths, court ordered medical examiner's inquiry, and written report
11 of inquiry, is amended by revising subsection (a) as follows:

12 "(a) When any individual dies in any county in this state:

13 (1) As a result of violence;

14 (2) By suicide or casualty;

15 (3) Suddenly when in apparent good health;

16 (4) In any suspicious or unusual manner, with particular attention to those individuals
17 16 years of age and under;

- 18 (5) After birth but before seven years of age if the death is unexpected or unexplained;
- 19 (6) As a result of an execution carried out pursuant to the imposition of the death penalty
- 20 under Article 2 of Chapter 10 of Title 17;
- 21 (7) When an inmate of a state hospital or a state, county, or city penal institution;
- 22 (8) After having been admitted to a hospital in an unconscious state and without
- 23 regaining consciousness within 24 hours of admission;
- 24 (9) As a result of an apparent drug overdose;
- 25 (10) Who is a pregnant female or a female who was pregnant within 365 days prior to
- 26 such female's death; provided, however, that this paragraph shall not apply to a female
- 27 whose death resulted from an incidental or accidental cause, including a motor vehicle
- 28 accident, or from any other event or condition where it is apparent that the death was not
- 29 causally related to the care of or physiology of pregnancy or its maintenance; or
- 30 (11) When unattended by a physician,
- 31 it shall be the duty of any law enforcement officer or other person having knowledge of
- 32 such death to notify immediately the coroner or county medical examiner of the county in
- 33 which the acts or events resulting in the death occurred or the body is found. For purposes
- 34 of paragraph (11) of this subsection, no individual shall be deemed to have died unattended
- 35 by a physician when the death occurred while he or she was a patient of a hospice licensed
- 36 under Article 9 of Chapter 7 of Title 31. For purposes of paragraph (11) of this subsection,
- 37 an individual shall be deemed to have died unattended by a physician when any such
- 38 individual had not been seen or treated by a physician within the ~~180~~ 60 days prior to such
- 39 individual's death for a condition or illness likely to have caused or contributed to such
- 40 individual's death. For purposes of paragraph (11) of this subsection, no individual shall
- 41 be deemed to have died unattended by a physician when the death occurred while he or she
- 42 was a resident of a long-term care facility, as defined in Code Section 31-8-51, if the
- 43 physician had seen or treated the resident within the 90 days prior to the individual's death."

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SECTION 2.

45 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.