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★ HEALTH

Stillborn birth certificates

Parents of stillborn children would have the option of receiving a birth certificate, under a bill unanimously approved by the House April 19.

Under current law, parents of stillborns in Minnesota can only receive a death certificate.

HF947 now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Ellen R. Anderson (DFL-St. Paul) is the sponsor. A successful delete-all amendment makes the language consistent with that of the Senate companion bill (SF1029).

Rep. Karen Klinzing (R-Woodbury), the bill's sponsor, said parents of stillborn children go through the labor process and a birth certificate recognizes that birth and helps families deal with the grief of losing an infant.

"This bill goes a long way in the healing process," said Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls).

The bill would require those responsible for filing a fetal death report to advise parents that they could request a record of birth, inform them the record is optional and explain how to obtain a record if they want one.

Under the bill, the state registrar would be required to prepare and file, within 30 days, a record of birth if one is requested.

A provision in the bill would make birth certificates for stillborns retroactive. A stillbirth that occurred in Minnesota at any time would be eligible for a birth certificate by the parents submitting a written request to the state registrar on or after Aug. 1, 2005.