

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 29

BY SENATOR MCMATH

PUBLIC HEALTH. Requires coroners to report certain information regarding sudden child deaths. (8/1/26)

AN ACT

To amend and reenact R.S. 13:5713(C), relative to autopsies of children; to require coroners to perform autopsies on certain children; to provide for the review of immunization records; to provide for reporting; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 13:5713(C) is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

§5713. Duties; autopsies and investigations

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C.(1)(a) The coroner shall perform or cause to be performed by a competent physician an autopsy in all cases of ~~infants under the age of one year~~ **children under the age of fifteen** who die unexpectedly without explanation.

(b) The autopsy shall include microscopic and toxicology studies **and a review of the child's immunization records, as available through the state immunization registry.**

(c) **The coroner shall document in the autopsy report any immunizations administered to the child within ninety days before the child's death.**

(d) The coroner shall furnish a death certificate based upon his autopsy with

his statement, to the best of his knowledge, of the cause and manner of death.

(2) If the coroner finds that the cause of death was Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, he shall notify the director of the parish health unit within forty-eight hours after such determination.

(3) **If the coroner finds that the cause of death was Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Sudden Unexpected Infant Death, Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome, or Sudden Death in the Young, he shall report the case to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health's Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Sudden Death in the Young Case Registry.**

(4) In preparing the certificate of death, the coroner may not, in lieu of an autopsy, rely on statements of relatives, persons in attendance during the last sickness, persons present at the time of death, or other persons having adequate knowledge of the facts, even if such data may be permitted in other cases in this Section.

~~(4)~~(5) The coroner shall not perform an autopsy if the parents of the ~~infant~~ **child** provide to the coroner their objection in writing, unless the coroner finds that the facts surrounding the death require that an autopsy be performed in the interest of the public safety, public health, or public welfare.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

SB 29 Original	DIGEST 2026 Regular Session	McMath
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Present law requires the coroner to perform or cause to be performed an autopsy in all cases of infants under the age of one year who die unexpectedly without explanation.

Proposed law expands the requirement to children under the age of 15 who die unexpectedly without explanation.

Present law requires the autopsies to include microscopic and toxicology studies.

Proposed law additionally requires a review of the child's immunization records through the

state immunization registry.

Proposed law requires the coroner to document in the autopsy report any immunizations administered to the child within 90 days before the child's death.

Present law requires the coroner to notify the director of the parish health unit if he finds that the cause of death was Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Proposed law requires the coroner to report to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health's Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Sudden Death in the Young Case Registry if he finds that the cause of death was Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Sudden Unexpected Infant Death, Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome, or Sudden Death in the Young.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Amends R.S. 13:5713(C))