

Senate Bill 327

By: Senators Albers of the 56th and Harper of the 7th

AS PASSED

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 2 of Chapter 16 of Title 45 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to death investigations, so as to clarify when a medical examiner's inquiry is required
3 to be conducted; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
4 purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 SECTION 1.

7 Article 2 of Chapter 16 of Title 45 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
8 death investigations, is amended by revising subsections (a) and (b) of Code
9 Section 45-16-24, relating to notification of suspicious or unusual deaths, court ordered
10 medical examiner's inquiry, and written report of inquiry, as follows:

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

12 (1) As a result of violence;

13 (2) By suicide or casualty;

14 (3) Suddenly when in apparent good health;

15 ~~(4) When unattended by a physician;~~

16 ~~(5)~~(4) In any suspicious or unusual manner, with particular attention to those
17 individuals 16 years of age and under;

18 ~~(6)~~(5) After birth but before seven years of age if the death is unexpected or unexplained;

19 ~~(7)~~(6) As a result of an execution carried out pursuant to the imposition of the death
20 penalty under Article 2 of Chapter 10 of Title 17;

21 ~~(8)~~(7) When an inmate of a state hospital or a state, county, or city penal institution;

22 ~~(9)~~(8) After having been admitted to a hospital in an unconscious state and without
23 regaining consciousness within 24 hours of admission; ~~or~~

24 ~~(10)~~(9) As a result of an apparent drug overdose; or

25 (10) When unattended by a physician,

26 it shall be the duty of any law enforcement officer or other person having knowledge of
27 such death to notify immediately the coroner or county medical examiner of the county in
28 which the acts or events resulting in the death occurred or the body is found. For the
29 purposes of this Code section, no individual shall be deemed to have died unattended when
30 the death occurred while he or she was a patient of a hospice licensed under Article 9 of
31 Chapter 7 of Title 31.

32 (b) A coroner or county medical examiner who is notified of a death pursuant to
33 subsection (a) of this Code section under circumstances specified in paragraphs (1) through
34 (9) of such subsection shall order a medical examiner's inquiry of that death. This
35 subsection shall not be construed to prohibit a medical examiner's inquiry of a death if a
36 coroner or county medical examiner is notified of a death under circumstances specified
37 in paragraph (10) of subsection (a) of this Code section."

38 **SECTION 2.**

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