

Senator Jen Beck Introduces Legislation That Prohibits Hospitals From Advertising Pediatric Emergency Room Services Without Certain Requirements; R Baby Foundation Supports Efforts

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(TRENTON) -- Legislation sponsored by Senator Jennifer Beck (R-Legislative District 11), provides New Jersey parents with the information they need to assess pediatric emergency departments to make the best choices for their families.

The legislation requires hospitals in the State to meet certain specific requirements set forth in the bill in order to advertise to the public that they provide the services of level-one or level-two pediatric emergency department. The bill also requires that the Department of Health (DOH) include in its annual New Jersey Hospital Performance Report hospital-specific data pertaining to pediatric emergency care deemed by the department to be most relevant for inclusion in the report. This bill will provide parents with important information to empower their healthcare choices.

“This measure is needed to discern between those facilities that are truly qualified to present themselves as designated pediatric emergency room facilities, and those that advertise to the public about their ability to provide emergent services to children in need,” said R Baby Co-Founder Andrew Rabinowitz. “We are very excited and applaud Senator Beck’s leadership and commitment to insuring the health and welfare of the children of New Jersey.”

Specifically, the bill requires that level-one or level-two pediatric emergency departments (PED) have a board certified pediatric emergency medicine physician as its director and a certified pediatric emergency nurse responsible for day-to-day managerial responsibility. Neither the director nor the nurse manager would be permitted to hold that position in another facility.

“For many families that have had tragedies like ours I think the public should be aware of those hospitals that can provide the best quality care to children who are in need of emergent services,” Phyllis Rabinowitz R Baby Co-Founder added. “While we understand that in certain emergency situations parents may need to take their children to the nearest hospital facility, parents should have the necessary information on where best care can be rendered so they can make the best choices for their family and not let proximity solely govern the decision.”

“Pediatric Emergency Departments should be held to defined criteria and standards - the same way Trauma Centers or Children's Hospitals have their guidelines” notes Dr. Ernest G. Leva, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Director Division of

Pediatric Emergency Medicine at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School/UMDNJ and an attending physician Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital. "Currently, hospitals can advertise as a PED without necessarily providing the expected services and without transparency and accountability to parents. Of paramount importance when treating children and families is their understanding of and belief in the system and that a pediatric emergency department is accurate and transparent in who they are. Our data shows that over 90% of parents believe that their children should be treated by a pediatrician when brought to a Pediatrics Emergency Department (PED). These same parents, when asked, overwhelmingly believe a pediatrician trained in Emergency Pediatrics would do a better job in treating their children than a General Emergency Medicine doctor. Over 90%, believed that when they sent their patients to a PED they should be seen by a Pediatrics Emergency Doctor. Our communities need to come together to support requirements that hold hospitals accountable for what they are portraying to the public and to assure that parents have accurate and transparent descriptions of PEDS and what services can be expected."

R Baby Foundation is the first and only not-for-profit foundation uniquely focused on saving babies' lives through improving pediatric emergency care. R Baby is dedicated to ensuring that all babies and children, including those in the first months of life, suffering from viral infections and other infectious diseases, receive the highest quality of care and service through supporting education, research, training and life-saving equipment. Their goal is to make sure that any baby or child in an emergency situation gets the appropriate and optimal healthcare either by stabilizing and transporting them to the best hospital or diagnosing and treating them where seen.

"We work with the top professionals in the medical community at Children's Hospitals to provide non-Children's Hospitals with the resources they need to improve the health of all our babies and children across the United States," said Rabinowitz. "We encourage all parents to get involved in helping to change the current regulations affecting pediatric emergency room care, and to assist Senator Beck in her quest to pass this important legislation. We are grateful for Senator Beck's leadership and hope that the progress New Jersey is making in protecting our children is embraced in other states and across the US."

"New Jersey has always been a leader when it comes to children's health," Senator Beck said. "The legislation which I introduced, Senate bill 2321, will impose requirements on hospitals that wish to have pediatric emergency rooms, as well as providing annual information for parents to discern when looking for the best place to have their children treated."

The Rabinowitzes lost their 9 day old daughter Rebecca Eva after a misdiagnosis in a New Jersey Emergency Room.