Dear Health Care Provider and/or Educator:

In July 2001 the North Carolina General Assembly created a Safe Haven Law. This law allows a parent to legally give up an unwanted infant anonymously and safely. The purpose of this law is to encourage parents who might otherwise abandon an infant in a way that might jeopardize the baby and/or the parent, to instead deliver the infant to a safe place. In June 2007 the General Assembly passed a subsequent law regarding annual education about the Safe Haven Law for students in grades nine through 12.

The Health Law Section of the North Carolina Bar Association provides this tool kit to assist you in educating your patients or upper grade students, as the case may be, about this law.

We hope that women will seek help and medical care while they are pregnant and not after they give birth. However, we want pregnant women (and the fathers) to know they will not be arrested or be tried for surrendering an infant to a hospital, health department, nonprofit community clinic or other Safe Haven under this law.

Your cooperation in distributing this information may help prevent the tragedy and sorrow associated with unlawful abandonments. Such information will also inform young parents of alternatives that protect them legally and confidentially, when they do not want their baby.

 Portions of this tool kit are modeled on materials developed by California, New Jersey and Illinois. These materials have been amended to reflect North Carolina law. We also acknowledge the kind contribution of the North Carolina Hospital Association in allowing us to include the Newborn Family Medical History form.

Sincerely,

Health Law Council