



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Larkin Bill To Prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome Becomes Law

WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR. July 25, 2007

Legislation sponsored by Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) requiring inmates to be educated on the dangers of shaken baby syndrome (SBS) has become law in New York State.

"Sadly, between 1400 and 1600 babies a year nationwide are victims of shaken baby syndrome," said Senator Larkin. "Approximately 105 of them come from New York and about 25 % die from their injuries. Half of the survivors are left with permanent disabilities. When a child is born to a parent who is incarcerated, that parent doesn't see the video on SBS that all other hospitals are required to show new parents. This new law will therefore require all parents incarcerated in state correctional facilities to receive instruction about SBS. By making SBS training part of correctional education programs, we can hopefully prevent future cases of shaken baby syndrome."

Chapter 219 of the Laws of 2004 required hospitals to request that all new parents watch a video on the prevention of SBS. This law has ensured that countless new parents learn about SBS and how to prevent it. Despite this law's success, this program often fails to reach parents who are incarcerated during a child's birth, as well as non-related adults in the household.

A recent study published in Pediatrics by researchers from the University of Missouri-Columbia and the University of Chicago shows that people who have been incarcerated

often have more difficulty with anger and stress management than those who have not been incarcerated. The study found that young children who live in households with one or more unrelated adults face a much higher risk of dying from an inflicted injury, including SBS. This injury rate is 50 times higher than households that have two biological parents.