

### **235A.15 Authorized access procedures involving other states.**

1. Notwithstanding chapter 22, the confidentiality of all child abuse information shall be maintained, except as specifically provided by this section.

2. Access to report data and disposition data subject to placement in the central registry pursuant to section 232.71D is authorized only to the following persons or entities:

*a.* Subjects of a report as follows:

(1) To a child named in a report as a victim of abuse or to the child's attorney or guardian ad litem.

(2) To a parent or to the attorney for the parent of a child named in a report as a victim of abuse.

(3) To a guardian or legal custodian, or that person's attorney, of a child named in a report as a victim of abuse.

(4) To a person or the attorney for the person named in a report as having abused a child.

*b.* Persons involved in an assessment of child abuse as follows:

(1) To a health practitioner or mental health professional who is examining, attending, or treating a child whom such practitioner or professional believes or has reason to believe has been the victim of abuse or to a health practitioner or mental health professional whose consultation with respect to a child believed to have been the victim of abuse is requested by the department.

(2) To an employee or agent of the department of human services responsible for the assessment of a child abuse report.

(3) To a law enforcement officer responsible for assisting in an assessment of a child abuse allegation or for the temporary emergency removal of a child from the child's home.

(4) To a multidisciplinary team, or to parties to an interagency agreement entered into pursuant to section 280.25, if the department of human services approves the composition of the multidisciplinary team or the relevant provisions of the interagency agreement and determines that access to the team or to the parties to the interagency agreement is necessary to assist the department in the diagnosis, assessment, and disposition of a child abuse case.

(5) In an individual case, to each mandatory reporter who reported the child abuse.

(6) To the county attorney.

(7) To the juvenile court.

(8) To a licensing authority for a facility providing care to a child named in a report, if the licensing authority is notified of a relationship between facility policy and the alleged child abuse under section 232.71B.

(9) To a person or agency responsible for the care or supervision of a child named in a report as a victim of abuse or a person named in a report as having abused a child, if the juvenile court or department deems access to report data and disposition data by the person or agency to be necessary.

(10) To the child protection assistance team established in accordance with section 915.35 for the county in which the report was made.

*c.* Individuals, agencies, or facilities providing care to a child, but only with respect to disposition data and, if authorized in law to the extent necessary for purposes of an employment evaluation, report data, for cases of founded child abuse placed in the central registry in accordance with section 232.71D as follows:

- (1) To an administrator of a psychiatric medical institution for children licensed under chapter 135H.
- (2) To an administrator of a child foster care facility licensed under chapter 237 if the data concerns a person employed or being considered for employment by the facility.
- (3) To an administrator of a child care facility registered or licensed under chapter 237A if the data concerns a person employed or being considered for employment by or living in the facility.
- (4) To the superintendent of the Iowa braille and sight saving school if the data concerns a person employed or being considered for employment or living in the school.
- (5) To the superintendent of the school for the deaf if the data concerns a person employed or being considered for employment or living in the school.
- (6) To an administrator of a community mental health center accredited under chapter 230A if the data concerns a person employed or being considered for employment by the center.
- (7) To an administrator of a facility or program operated by the state, a city, or a county which provides services or care directly to children, if the data concerns a person employed by or being considered for employment by the facility or program.
- (8) To an administrator of an agency certified by the department of human services to provide services under a medical assistance home and community-based services waiver, if the data concerns a person employed by or being considered by the agency for employment.
- (9) To the administrator of an agency providing mental health, mental retardation, or developmental disability services under a county management plan developed pursuant to section 331.439, if the data concerns a person employed by or being considered by the agency for employment.
- (10) To an administrator of a child care resource and referral agency which has entered into an agreement authorized by the department to provide child care resource and referral services. Access is authorized if the data concerns a person providing child care services or a person employed by a provider of such services and the agency includes the provider as a referral or the provider has requested to be included as a referral.
- (11) To an administrator of a hospital licensed under chapter 135B if the data concerns a person employed or being considered for employment by the hospital.

*d.* Report data and disposition data, and assessment data to the extent necessary for resolution of the proceeding, relating to judicial and administrative proceedings as follows:

- (1) To a juvenile court involved in an adjudication or disposition of a child named in a report.
- (2) To a district court upon a finding that data is necessary for the resolution of an issue arising in any phase of a case involving child abuse.
- (3) To a court or administrative agency hearing an appeal for correction of report data and disposition data as provided in section 235A.19.

(4) To an expert witness at any stage of an appeal necessary for correction of report data and disposition data as provided in section 235A.19.

(5) To a probation or parole officer, juvenile court officer, court appointed special advocate as defined in section 232.2, or adult correctional officer having custody or supervision of, or conducting an investigation for a court or the board of parole regarding, a person named in a report as a victim of child abuse or as having abused a child.

(6) To the department of justice for purposes of review by the prosecutor's review committee or the commitment of sexually violent predators as provided in chapter 229A.

(7) Each board of examiners specified under chapter 147 and the Iowa department of public health for the purpose of licensure, certification or registration, disciplinary investigation, or the renewal of licensure, certification or registration, or disciplinary proceedings of health care professionals.

*e.* Others as follows, but only with respect to report data and disposition data for cases of founded child abuse subject to placement in the registry pursuant to section 232.71D:

(1) To a person conducting bona fide research on child abuse, but without data identifying individuals named in a child abuse report, unless having that data open to review is essential to the research or evaluation and the authorized registry officials give prior written approval and the child, the child's guardian or guardian ad litem and the person named in a report as having abused a child give permission to release the data.

(2) To registry or department personnel when necessary to the performance of their official duties or to a person or agency under contract with the department to carry out official duties and functions of the department.

(3) To the department of justice for the sole purpose of the filing of a claim for restitution or compensation pursuant to sections 915.21 and 915.84. Data provided pursuant to this subparagraph is subject to the provisions of section 915.90.

(4) To a legally constituted child protection agency of another state which is investigating or assessing or treating a child named in a report as having been abused or which is investigating or assessing or treating a person named as having abused a child.

(5) To a public or licensed child placing agency of another state responsible for an adoptive or foster care preplacement or placement evaluation.

(6) To the attorney for the department of human services who is responsible for representing the department.

(7) To the child advocacy and local citizen foster care review boards created pursuant to sections 237.16 and 237.19.

(8) To an employee or agent of the department of human services regarding a person who is providing child care if the person is not registered or licensed to operate a child care facility.

(9) To the board of educational examiners created under chapter 272 for purposes of determining whether a practitioner's license should be denied or revoked.

(10) To a legally constituted child protection agency in another state if the agency is conducting a records check of a person who is providing care or has applied to provide care to a child in the other state.

(11) To the legally authorized protection and advocacy agency recognized in section 135C.2, if a person

identified in the information as a victim or a perpetrator of abuse resides in or receives services from a facility or agency because the person is diagnosed as having a developmental disability or a mental illness.

(12) To the department of human services for a record check relating to employment or residence pursuant to section 218.13.

(13) To the Iowa board for the treatment of sexual abusers for purposes of certifying sex offender treatment providers.

(14) To an employee or agent of the department responsible for registering or licensing or approving the registration or licensing of an agency or facility, or to an individual providing care to a child and regulated by the department.

(15) To an employee of the department responsible for an adoptive placement, a certified adoption investigator, or licensed child placing agency responsible for an adoptive placement.

(16) To the superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, of a school district or to the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school for purposes of a volunteer or employment record check.

(17) To the department of inspections and appeals for purposes of record checks of applicants for employment with the department of inspections and appeals.

*f.* Only with respect to disposition data for cases of founded child abuse subject to placement in the central registry pursuant to section 232.71D, to a person who submits written authorization from an individual allowing the person access to data pursuant to this subsection on behalf of the individual in order to verify whether the individual is named in a founded child abuse report as having abused a child.

3. Access to report data and disposition data for a case of child abuse determined to meet the definition of child abuse, which data is not subject to placement in the central registry pursuant to section 232.71D, is authorized only to the following persons:

*a.* Subjects of a report identified in subsection 2, paragraph "a".

*b.* Persons involved in an assessment of child abuse identified in subsection 2, paragraph "b", subparagraphs (2), (3), (4), (6), (7), and (9).

*c.* Others identified in subsection 2, paragraph "e", subparagraphs (2), (3), and (6).

*d.* The department of justice for purposes of review by the prosecutor's review committee or the commitment of sexually violent predators as provided in chapter 229A.

4. Access to report data for a case of child abuse determined to not meet the definition of child abuse, which data is not subject to placement in the central registry pursuant to section 232.71D, is authorized only to the following:

*a.* Subjects of a report identified in subsection 2, paragraph "a".

*b.* Persons involved in an assessment of child abuse identified in subsection 2, paragraph "b", subparagraphs (2), (6), and (7).

*c.* Others identified in subsection 2, paragraph "e", subparagraph (2).

*d.* The department of justice for purposes of review by the prosecutor's review committee or the commitment

of sexually violent predators as provided in chapter 229A.

5. Access to disposition data subject to placement in the central registry pursuant to section 232.71D is authorized to the department of administrative services or to the personnel office of a public employer, as defined in section 20.3, as necessary for presentation in grievance or arbitration procedures provided for in sections 8A.415 and 20.18. Disposition data introduced into a grievance or arbitration proceeding shall not be considered a part of the public record of a case.

6. *a.* If a child who is a legal resident of another state is present in this state and a report of child abuse is made concerning the child, the department shall act to ensure the safety of the child. The department shall contact the child's state of legal residency to coordinate the assessment of the report. If the child's state of residency refuses to conduct an assessment, the department shall commence an appropriate assessment.

*b.* If a report of child abuse is made concerning an alleged perpetrator who resides in this state and a child who resides in another state, the department shall assist the child's state of residency in conducting an assessment of the report. The assistance shall include but is not limited to an offer to interview the alleged perpetrator and any other relevant source. If the child's state of residency refuses to conduct an assessment of the report, the department shall commence an appropriate assessment. The department shall seek to develop protocols with states contiguous to this state for coordination in the assessment of a report of child abuse when a person involved with the report is a resident of another state.

7. If the director of human services receives a written request for information regarding a specific case of child abuse involving a fatality or near fatality to a child from the majority or minority leader of the senate or the speaker or the minority leader of the house of representatives, the director or the director's designee shall arrange for a confidential meeting with the requestor or the requestor's designee. In the confidential meeting the director or the director's designee shall share all pertinent information concerning the case, including but not limited to child abuse information. Any written document distributed by the director or the director's designee at the confidential meeting shall not be removed from the meeting and a participant in the meeting shall be subject to the restriction on redissemination of confidential information applicable to a person under section 235A.17, subsection 3, for confidential information disclosed to the participant at the meeting. A participant in the meeting may issue a report to the governor or make general public statements concerning the department's handling of the case of child abuse.

8. Upon the request of the governor, the department shall disclose child abuse information to the governor or the governor's designee relating to a specific case of child abuse reported to the department.

9. If, apart from a request made pursuant to subsection 7 or 8, the department receives from a member of the public a request for information relating to a case of founded child abuse involving a fatality or near fatality to a child, the response to the request shall be made in accordance with this subsection and subsections 10 and 11. If the request is received before or during performance of an assessment of the case in accordance with section 232.71B, the director of human services or the director's designee shall initially disclose whether or not the assessment will be or is being performed. Otherwise, within five business days of receiving the request or completing the assessment, whichever is later, the director of human services or the director's designee shall consult with the county attorney responsible for prosecution of any alleged perpetrator of the fatality or near fatality and shall disclose information, including but not limited to child abuse information, relating to the case, except for the following:

*a.* The substance or content of any mental health or psychological information that is confidential under chapter 228.

*b.* Information that constitutes the substance or contains the content of an attorney work product or is a privileged communication under section 622.10.

*c.* Information that would reveal the identity of any individual who provided information relating to a report of child abuse or an assessment of such a report involving the child.

*d.* Information that the director or the director's designee reasonably believes is likely to cause mental or physical harm to a sibling of the child or to another child residing in the child's household.

*e.* Information that the director or the director's designee reasonably believes is likely to jeopardize the prosecution of any alleged perpetrator of the fatality or near fatality.

*f.* Information that the director or the director's designee reasonably believes is likely to jeopardize the rights of any alleged perpetrator of the fatality or near fatality to a fair trial.

*g.* Information that the director or the director's designee reasonably believes is likely to undermine an ongoing or future criminal investigation.

*h.* Information, the release of which is a violation of federal law or regulation.

10. The information released by the director of human services or the director's designee pursuant to a request made under subsection 9 relating to a case of founded child abuse involving a fatality or near fatality to a child shall include all of the following, unless such information is excepted from disclosure under subsection 9:

*a.* Any relevant child abuse information concerning the child or the child's family and the department's response and findings.

*b.* A summary of information, that would otherwise be confidential under section 217.30, as to whether or not the child or a member of the child's family was utilizing social services provided by the department at the time of the child fatality or near fatality or within the five-year period preceding the fatality or near fatality.

*c.* Any recommendations made by the department to the county attorney or the juvenile court.

*d.* If applicable, a summary of an evaluation of the department's responses in the case.

11. *a.* If a person who made a request for information under subsection 9 does not believe the department has substantially complied with the request, the person may apply to the juvenile court under section 235A.24 for an order for disclosure of additional information.

*b.* If release of social services information in addition to that released under subsection 10, paragraph "b", is believed to be in the public's interest and right to know, the director of human services or the director's designee may apply to the court under section 235A.24 requesting a review of the information proposed for release and an order authorizing release of the information. A release of information that would otherwise be confidential under section 217.30 concerning social services provided to the child or the child's family shall not include information concerning financial or medical assistance provided to the child or the child's family.

12. If an individual who is the subject of a child abuse report listed in subsection 2, paragraph "a", or another party involved in a child abuse assessment under section 232.71B releases in a public forum or to the media information concerning a case of child abuse including but not limited to child abuse information which would otherwise be confidential, the director of human services, or the director's designee, may respond with relevant information concerning the case of child abuse that was the subject of the release. Prior to releasing the response, the director or the director's designee shall consult with the child's parent or guardian, or the child's guardian ad litem, and apply to the court under section 235A.24 requesting a review of the information proposed for release and an order authorizing release of the information.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, § 235A.15; 82 Acts, ch 1066, § 2]

83 Acts, ch 96, § 157, 159; 85 Acts, ch 173, § 16; 85 Acts, ch 174, § 1; 86 Acts, ch 1177, § 2; 87 Acts, ch 153, § 10, 11; 88 Acts, ch 1158, § 53; 89 Acts, ch 65, § 1; 89 Acts, ch 283, § 25; 90 Acts, ch 1221, § 3, 4; 90 Acts, ch 1248, § 1; 90 Acts, ch 1249, § 1; 91 Acts, ch 97, § 30; 91 Acts, ch 138, § 5, 6; 92 Acts, ch 1141, § 4; 92 Acts, ch 1143, § 3, 4; 93 Acts, ch 76, §3, 4; 94 Acts, ch 1023, §43; 94 Acts, ch 1156, §1; 95 Acts, ch 93, § 13; 95 Acts, ch 182, § 15, 16; 96 Acts, ch 1175, § 4; 96 Acts, ch 1183, § 28; 97 Acts, ch 176, § 9, 3237, 43; 98 Acts, ch 1090, §64, 84; 98 Acts, ch 1100, §97; 98 Acts, ch 1115, §3; 99 Acts, ch 61, §1012, 14; 99 Acts, ch 111, §8; 99 Acts, ch 141, §31; 99 Acts, ch 192, §33; 2000 Acts, ch 1123, §3; 2000 Acts, ch 1137, §69, 14; 2000 Acts, ch 1153, §1; 2001 Acts, ch 8, §2; 2002 Acts, ch 1034, §2; 2002 Acts, ch 1162, §19; 2003 Acts, ch 107, §2; 2003 Acts, ch 145, §217, 286; 2004 Acts, ch 1116, §27; 2004 Acts, ch 1153, §47

## **Footnotes**

See §235A.24