



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

**House Bill 4700**

**Sponsor: Rep. Michael J. Bennane**

**Committee: Public Health**

**Complete to 9-4-91**

**A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4700 AS INTRODUCED 4-16-91**

The bill would amend the Public Health Code to require that physicians and health facilities turn over their patients' medical records and certain other evidence to county medical examiners under certain circumstances, and to exempt physicians and health facilities from civil and criminal liability when they did so.

The county medical examiners act (Public Act 181 of 1953) requires that county medical examiners conduct investigations of certain kinds of deaths: if the death was violent, unexpected, or if the person was medically unattended for 48 hours before the death occurred; if the death was the result of an abortion; or if the death was that of a prisoner in a county or city jail.

Under the bill, when a county medical examiner (or deputy county medical examiner) was investigating a death as required by law and requested in writing the medical records and existing blood, urine, or tissue samples (or "other biological materials") relating to the death under investigation, the physician or health facility holding these records and samples would be required to turn them over to the investigating county medical examiner (or deputy county medical examiner).

Physicians and health facilities who complied ("in good faith") with the bill's requirements would not be violating the physician-patient privilege established under the Revised Judicature Act, nor would they be liable for damages in a civil action or subject to criminal prosecution.

MCL 333.17035, 333.17535, and 333.20195

House Bill 4700 (9-4-91)