



# NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Social Services

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## **California Department of Social Services Expands Public Outreach Effort with Launch of Statewide Safe Surrender Baby Hotline**

*1-877-BABYSAF Provides Information on All Safe Surrender Sites Across California*

SACRAMENTO – John Wagner, director of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) today announced the launch of a toll-free hotline and collaboration with Los Angeles County that enables statewide access to all Safe Surrender Baby site locations in California. Effective immediately, residents in the state's 58 counties can call the toll-free hotline (1-877-BABYSAF and 1-877-222-9723) and receive hospital and designated fire station safe surrender site locations within their local communities.

"I am pleased to partner with Los Angeles County in this expanded effort to further promote the Safely Surrendered Baby law," said Wagner. "This statewide hotline is an important service to help protect newborns by increasing awareness of the safe and legal alternative available to mothers who are unable or unwilling to keep their baby for whatever reason."

Los Angeles County currently provides Safe Surrender Baby site locations for 20 counties through its 211 information and referral line. CDSS sought to incorporate the state's remaining 38 counties and partnered with Los Angeles County to establish the 1-877-BABYSAF hotline, which is connected to the Los Angeles 211 operators. Through the 1-877-BABYSAF hotline, callers in all 58 California counties will be provided the locations of the various Safe Surrender sites in their areas upon request.

Counties received instructions today from CDSS to request that counties place this hotline telephone number on their Web site and advertise in a useful way.

The Safely Surrendered Baby law took effect in January 2001. Since that time, 331 newborns have been safely surrendered in California. In Los Angeles County, 64 babies have been safely surrendered since the inception of the law.

Under the law, a parent or person with lawful custody can safely and confidentially surrender an unharmed baby within 72 hours of birth to any hospital or designated Safe Surrender Site in California – no questions asked. The parent or surrendering person is not required to provide his or her name and is protected from prosecution for child abandonment if the baby has not suffered abuse. The parent or surrendering individual has up to 14 days from the time of the safe surrender to reclaim the baby.

For more information the SSB law, visit our Web site at [www.babysafe.ca.gov](http://www.babysafe.ca.gov).

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