



New IL Law Helps People Find Families

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Taking effect today, an Illinois law that could help thousands of people find their families. The new law gives those who have been adopted the right to their original birth certificate. Those who were born on or after 1946 and are at least 21 years old, can request copies of their original birth certificates from the Illinois Department of Public Health.

With access to their original birth certificates they may be able to learn the names of their biological parents, medical history, and if they have siblings.

The Illinois Department of Public Health says that 2,000 people have already made inquiries.

"I'll hear them say, I got to meet my brother and I haven't seen him in forty years. I found my family," said Nancy Maday from Iowa Kidsnet. And now in Illinois adopted adults can have access to that type of information. Adopted adults could have been seeking the names of their birth parents and family health history for years.

"They need that information. They may have conditions or a predisposition to a condition and they have no idea. It can be lurking around out there. So I just think it is good that they are going to allow them to have those records and find out that information," said Maday.

But Division Director at Bethany for Children and Families, Deanna Solis, wants to warn those seeking out information to be cautious. Many adopted people seek out their birth parents in hopes of reunions.

"I have no doubt that this law will result in many successful reunions, between those who have a mutual desire to meet. My fear however, for those who might not be on the same page, or might be at different times in their life, or might not quite ready to be found. I fear that heartache and disappointment could occur for the person who is adopted," said Solis.

She recommends those wanting to find information about their past, do so with help from a professional. She hopes adopted adults can find they answers they need with this new law.

"Perhaps several people's questions will be answered regarding their medical history, other siblings that they might have, that they weren't aware of. So many times the questions that they've had for many years could possibly be answered in accordance to this new law," said Solis.

There are some contingencies to filing for an original birth certificate. Birth parents can keep their names and addresses confidential, while still providing medical information. And sometimes, original birth certificates do not exist, and in that case the state cannot help out.



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