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Next of kin database now available on Ohio drivers

By Matt Sanctis
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COLUMBUS — When Carmela Wiant's son, David Money, died in an auto accident more than a year ago, deputies had trouble finding a close relative, and it took several hours before she was notified.

She eventually learned of her son's death over the phone.

After more than a year of work-

ing with police and politicians, Wiant helped to make sure other parents won't have the same experience. On Monday, Sept. 8, the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles opened Ohio's Next of Kin Registration System.

It allows anyone with an Ohio driver's license to provide contact information for whom they wish to be contacted in an emergency.

For Wiant, of Mechanicsburg, the system means some parents might

be able to get to the hospital a little quicker. If there's a death, they may learn in person, not on the phone.

"It's not about me," she said. "It's not about my son. It's about no other parent having to go through this."

The database was created through the Money-Burge Act, signed into law by Gov. Ted Strickland in May. The law was named after Wiant's son and Steve Burge, a Columbus-area man who died in a separate accident.

Ohio is one of the first states to introduce this type of program, said Lindsey Bohrer, a public information officer with the Ohio BMV.

Residents can register at www.bmv.ohio.gov, through the mail or at any local BMV office.

Wiant said she was glad other parents may be able to learn of a tragedy in person rather than over the phone. "I just never want a parent ... to hear about it that way."



Gov. Ted Strickland with Carmela Wiant and her grandson, David Harvey. Contributed photo