

National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome

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www.dontshake.org

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Kansas International Film Festival

C/o Festival Organizers
Glenwood Arts Theatre
3859 West 95 Street
Overland Park, KS 66206

Dear Festival Organizers,

We at the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome (NCSBS) recently became aware of a film titled "The Syndrome" that is scheduled for screening at your upcoming film festival. We viewed the trailer, the accompanying prerelease marketing materials, and the film's social media channels and have significant concerns regarding the film's message, specifically the inference that Shaken Baby Syndrome does not exist.

The film's website specifically states:

"The Syndrome is an explosive documentary following the crusade of a group of doctors, scientists, and legal scholars who have uncovered that 'Shaken Baby Syndrome,' a child abuse theory responsible for hundreds of prosecutions each year in the US, is not scientifically valid. In fact, they say, it does not even exist."

The NCSBS finds this statement appalling, inaccurate and potentially dangerous. Evidence-based medical literature does not support this minority opinion, and, in fact, overwhelmingly supports the validity of the Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma (SBS/AHT) diagnosis. A considerable number of professional and esteemed organizations recognize both the legitimacy of SBS/AHT and the serious consequences that shaking can cause. These organizations include the American Academy of Pediatrics, the World Health Organization, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Academy of Neurology, the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All of these groups recognize Shaken Baby Syndrome as "a public health issue" and "as the leading cause of child maltreatment deaths in the United States."

At the NCSBS, we work with a diverse group of medical and scientific experts who have diagnosed and treated infants who suffered SBS/AHT injuries. This group includes pediatricians, neurologists, radiologists, pathologists and many other specialists among a vast array of medical fields. We also work with numerous families of victims whose daily lives revolve around caring for their children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, brothers and sisters who suffered from this violent form of abuse. They know all too well the reality of SBS/AHT.

We recently completed our Fourteenth International Conference on SBS/AHT in Denver, Colorado where nearly 500 families of victims and medical, legal, scientific and prevention

professionals could share their latest research and prevention efforts. Earlier this year, we were part of an international team that facilitated a similar conference in Paris, France where more than 300 professionals from 22 different countries benefitted from the latest SBS/AHT research. SBS/AHT is a worldwide problem.

The NCSBS urges you to consider withdrawing the film from your film festival. We are concerned that the film contains inaccurate and misleading information about SBS/AHT that may result in serious public health risks. Should viewers leave with the impression that shaking an infant does not cause serious harm that could result in death, numerous infants could be put in significant danger.

We, along with hundreds of other child abuse prevention agencies, work tirelessly to protect children from this serious form of abuse. Propagating the messages this film promises to deliver severely damages the prevention efforts put forth. We encourage you to carefully consider our request to remove the film from your film festival and hope you will join us in our fight against infant abuse.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Steinbeigle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ryan" written in a larger, more distinct script than the last name "Steinbeigle".

Ryan L. Steinbeigle, MBA
Executive Director
National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome