

Police say baby may have been neglected

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SANTA CRUZ — Police say a homeless infant who died last month may have been severely neglected, even though the county's Child Protective Services agency had been assigned the case.

"Right now the focus of our investigation is neglect," said Detective Loran Baker of the Santa Cruz police.

County Human Resources Agency spokeswoman Gail Groves said last week the baby boy, who was called Cricket, probably died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Groves said Child Protective Services had been monitoring the mother and baby carefully, and the baby appeared to be getting enough food and care.

The baby was born Sep. 2 and died Sept. 29. He was buried Thursday in a private graveside ceremony in Santa Cruz attended by his mother Lynn Rubin, a family friend and a social worker.

The baby and his mother were found in a local park days after the birth by two Santa Cruz women, who took the pair to Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital.

The baby spent a week there and was released to Rubin, who was assigned a social worker from Child Protective Services and given vouchers to stay at the Blackburn House Motel in Santa Cruz.

The social worker reportedly checked on Rubin daily to ensure she was taking good care of the baby.

Physician Kristina Muten, who saw the baby two days before his death at the Westside Community Health Center, would discuss no details of the case but confirmed the baby was in good health when she saw him.

Two days after the medical check up, the baby died.

A woman claiming to be Rubin called the Sentinel last week and complained that facts in an Oct. 5 story about the baby's death were incorrect, but she refused to discuss details or meet with reporters.

Rubin checked out of the Blackburn House Motel after the baby's death, and has told authorities she is staying with friends.

Police say they are gathering evidence and waiting for a medical examiner's report, which may be forwarded to the Santa Cruz County District Attorney for possible prosecution.