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DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES ‘SAFE SLEEP’ CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE INFANT FATALITIES CAUSED BY UNSAFE SLEEP

City hospitals and community health centers will teach parents about risks associated with unsafe sleep practices and provide information on how to prevent injuries and fatalities

NEW YORK — Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the Safe Sleep campaign to increase awareness among parents and other caregivers about the potentially fatal risks of sharing a bed with an infant, and how to prevent injuries and deaths associated with other unsafe sleep practices, such as excessive bedding, bumpers and toys in cribs. At the core of the new campaign is a renewed effort by City-run health facilities to increase education on infant safe sleep practices to parents and caregivers during the prenatal and postpartum period.

“Many parents may not know that sharing a other unsafe sleep practices put babies at **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “We must step up make families aware of the importance of practices, including placing your baby on alone in a crib, keeping excessive bedding soft objects out of the crib, and keeping a home.”

The Safe Sleep campaign is being spearheaded by the office of Deputy Mayor and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, collaboration with the Administration for Services (ACS), Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), Human Resources Administration, (HRA), Department of Services (DHS), and the Department of Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Since 2007, has partnered with the Cribs for Kids provide cribs for eligible families. Through Family Partnership and Newborn Home Visiting programs, families receive safe sleep education and, if needed, are provided with a crib. More than 35,000 families have received safe sleep education and 4,600 cribs have been provided to families in the Newborn Home Visiting Program. More than 9,500 mothers have received education in the Nurse-Family Partnership Program. It is important that safe sleep education is complemented with resources that will assist families to keep their infant safe.

“The first months of parenting are stressful and might lead to loving, but unsafe, practices. We can help parents by making information and resources available to support best sleep practices,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli**. “We need the knowledge of Safe Sleep to be shared, and must provide families with the tools they need to keep their children safe.”



bed and risk,” said efforts to safe sleep her back, and other smoke-free

for Health in Children

Homeless Health and DOHMH Program to the Nurse

The new Safe Sleep Campaign also includes:

- New materials developed by DOHMH and ACS to educate parents about the potentially fatal consequences of unsafe sleep practices.
- A directive for all NYC human services agencies to identify points of contact with clients in which to disseminate messaging about Safe Sleep in all City-mandated foreign languages.
- An educational campaign for subways, buses, taxis, and social media to raise awareness of this problem in communities around the city.
- An advocacy and outreach campaign to engage community and private partners in awareness efforts.
- An in-depth yearly review of infant deaths associated with unsafe sleeping practices that will inform ongoing education efforts.

“Placing babies to sleep in unsafe conditions is a leading cause of infant suffocation deaths in New York City,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary Bassett**. “I thank Mayor de Blasio for his efforts to make sure our littlest New Yorkers always sleep safely. We look forward to working with health care facilities and other City agencies to prevent infant fatalities caused by unsafe sleep.”

“It takes an entire city to raise healthy and safe children and this initiative is a testament to the importance of a collaborative multi-system response to this public health issue,” said **ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión**. “Through an integrated approach, we can raise awareness and empower families with life-saving information and resources to promote safe sleep and reduce infant injury.”

HHC will further expand its safe sleep program to spread the word about safe sleep prenatal care and post-partum units and will new safe sleep campaign materials in all lobbies, waiting areas and on flat screen TVs throughout the hospitals to help reach the broader hospital community, and extended family members. The new to HHC’s safe sleep education to all patients, to all women who give birth at its centers, and includes spouses and family its Safe Sleep counseling and demonstration

“We are proud to set an example for other systems across the City and are committed we can to ensure families leave our labor units with a full understanding of the of safe sleep practices for their newborns,” **President Dr. Ram Raju**.



education beyond the display the hospital

visitors, staff efforts adds prenatal care 11 hospital members in sessions.

hospital to doing all and delivery importance said **HHC**

“The safety of our children in shelters throughout the city is of the utmost importance,” said **DHS Commissioner Gilbert Taylor**. “DHS has prioritized safe sleep as part of our child safety efforts. We work closely with our staff and providers to ensure that families with young children are fully educated on safe sleeping practices and have well-maintained cribs in their units.”

The Safe Sleep initiative follows the second-annual Infant Safe Sleep Symposium, which was held on December 16, 2014 and organized by ACS, with support from other city agencies and Casey Family Programs. The symposium brought together more than 200 health, human services and child welfare experts to discuss ways in which existing safe sleep education and practices can be enhanced for a greater citywide impact.

Important facts about sleep-related infant deaths in New York City:

- Between 2004 and 2011, the majority of infant injury deaths were sleep-related.

- Infants between 28 days and 4 months old, black non-Hispanic infants, babies born pre-term, and babies born to adolescent mothers were at a higher risk for sleep-related death than other infants.
- While the rate of SIDS cases has gone down in the last decade, the number of infant deaths from a sleep-related injury has not changed in the past several years – every year an average of 48 infants die from a preventable sleep-related injury.

Approximately 80 percent of all infant deaths that are due to injury are related to the infant’s sleep position and environment. These deaths, commonly referred to as sleep-related, are also among the most preventable. These guidelines should be followed:

- Always place your baby to sleep on her back
- Your baby should sleep in a safety-approved crib near your bed. Sleeping in the same room as your baby (sometimes referred to as room-sharing) is recommended; sleeping on the same surface as your baby (sometime referred to as bed-sharing) is not recommended.
- Breastfeeding mothers should place their baby back into her crib before going to sleep
- Nothing but your baby should be in the crib (no pillows, blankets, bumpers or other soft objects)
- Cribs should have a firm mattress with a fitted sheet only
- No smoking around your baby

For more information about how to keep your baby safe, search “infant sleep” at nyc.gov. New Yorkers can also call 311 to order safe sleep magnets, available in English, Spanish, Creole, Chinese and French.

“Pre-natal care is the building-block for the long-term health of a baby and awareness on these matters is of the utmost importance,” said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.** “The Safe Sleep campaign is a helpful tool in helping educate parents – especially first-time parents who can be overwhelmed by the experience – about keeping their newborn sound and safe as they sleep. I want to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Health Commissioner Dr. Mary Bassett, ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión, HHC President Ram Raju, and DHS Commissioner Gilbert Taylor for bringing this initiative to the forefront.”

“As Chair of the Committee on Women’s Issues, I applaud the de Blasio Administration and this coalition of city agencies on the launch of the Safe Sleep Campaign. Through educational resources and materials, we can ensure that parents and guardians are knowledgeable about the best sleep practices to protect the health and welfare of our city’s newborns,” said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo.**

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