

NEWS RELEASE

Public Health - Madison & Dane County

For Immediate Release

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County Initiative Works to Save Babies' Lives

Sleep Safe, Sleep Well Campaign Launched Week before Mother's Day

MADISON, WI – May 7, 2014- In the past 5 years (2009-2013), 26 babies have died in Dane County from Sudden Unexpected Infant Death, and 22 of those died in unsafe sleep environments. To support families in keeping their babies safe, the Dane County Safe Sleep Initiative launched a Sleep Safe campaign the first week of May.

Sudden unexpected infant death, or SUID, is the third leading cause of death for babies in Dane County. The cause of these deaths is not known until after a thorough investigation. Investigations show that the vast majority—over 80%—of SUID deaths in Dane County since 2011 were due to unsafe sleep conditions that lead to babies accidentally suffocating or strangling in their sleep.

“In response to concerning infant death data for Dane County, one of our goals with the Safe Sleep Initiative was to develop an evidence-based, clear, consistent county-wide infant safe sleep message to be used by all,” said Nan Peterson, RN, MS, Co-chair of the Dane County Safe Sleep Initiative and Director of Child Health Advocacy at American Family Children’s Hospital. “We are focused on helping the families in our communities modify risk factors that can lead to an infant’s death. We need the collective impact of everyone to promote infant health.”

To give babies the safest sleep environment, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following:

- Put baby to sleep on his or her back alone in a crib, Pack-in-Play[®], or bassinette
- Give baby a firm mattress and keep the sleep environment free from pillows, blankets, and soft toys
- Share the room, but not the bed (or couch or chair); give baby his or her own sleeping space
- Breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months and avoid exposure to tobacco smoke

“Parents want what is best for their children: They want to protect their babies. This includes breastfeeding, sleeping near their baby, and being able to respond when their baby wakes,” said Daniel Stattelman-Scanlan, Co-chair of the Safe Sleep Initiative and Public Health Nursing Manager with Public Health Madison and Dane County. “We fully support these healthy behaviors and plan to work with caregivers to show how they can be combined with a safe sleep environment.”

The Dane County Safe Sleep Initiative formed in October 2012. Members from over 40 community-based groups have worked together to develop a countywide infant safe sleep program. The Sleep Safe, Sleep Well campaign is one part of this effort, and was developed in cooperation with representatives from diverse communities in Dane County.

For more information on the Safe Sleep Initiative see

<http://www.uwhealthkids.org/kids-health-and-safety/safe-to-sleep/35395>

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An online version of this release is available at

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/news/county-initiative-works-to-save-babies-lives>