

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**RE:** **Safe Sleep Awareness Month**

September is Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month in Michigan. Genesee County Health Department is working with Weiss Child Advocacy Center to remind parents and caregivers of techniques that can help reduce the infant death rate in Genesee County.

Sleep-related infant deaths are those where the sleep environment was likely to have contributed to the death, including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), suffocation, and other causes. Sleep-related infant death is a leading cause of death among infants less than 1 year of age. In Genesee County between 2010 and 2015, 59 sleep-related infant deaths were reported, which is a rate of 2.0 deaths per 1,000. The sleep-related deaths in Genesee County is more than the overall rate in Michigan, which is 1.3 deaths per 1,000.

Genesee County babies have suffocated while sleeping in adult beds, sleeping on furniture such as a couch or chair, sharing a bed with an adult or child, and sleeping with pillows, cushions, and blankets. All babies should always be placed to sleep on their backs in their own cribs, never on their sides or tummies.

Lifesaving steps parents and caregivers can take to protect their baby include:

- Never put the baby to sleep with adults or other children. This practice increases the risk of a tragedy occurring.
- Put babies in cribs of their own, never on adult beds, pillows or couches.

- Use a firm mattress with a tightly fitted sheet.
- Ensure the crib does not contain any extra items, including pillows, crib bumpers and stuffed animals.
- Use a safe sleep sack instead of blankets.
- Do not overheat the baby's room.
- Make certain that no one smokes around the baby.
- Make sure everyone caring for your baby knows these guidelines, including babysitters, friends, and family members.

There are many resources available to the general public, parents, families, professionals, and caregivers of infants. Within Genesee County, Weiss Child Advocacy Center offers trainings on Safe Sleep and houses the Safe Sleep Coalition of Genesee County that meets monthly. If you are interested in learning more about the coalition, visit <https://www.facebook.com/safe2sleep/>. For additional safe sleep information, visit the Genesee County Health Department's website at <https://gchd.us/services/maternalinfant-services/genesee-county-infant-safe-sleep/> or Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website at <http://www.michigan.gov/safesleep>

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