

HOSPITAL PROGRAMS CAN REDUCE UNSAFE SLEEP DEATHS

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OBJECTIVES

- Describe what constitutes “unsafe sleep”
- Recognize the major causes of child abuse deaths and the need for prevention
- Explain how education in the newborn units might reduce the rate of unsafe sleep deaths

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UNSAFE SLEEP

- When a child sleeps in an environment in which they may have compromised breathing
 - Sleep in a bed with an adult
 - Sleep with an adult on a sofa, etc
 - Sleep in a clutter crib or on their stomach
- Leading cause of child maltreatment death in Florida (followed by drowning and less often – physical abuse)
- Imperative: prevent such deaths. But traditional education has not lessened the number of deaths for years

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METHODS – PINELLAS COUNTY

- Safe sleep education was provided to new mothers in various settings:
 - Delivery hospitals
 - WIC offices
 - Pediatrician offices
 - OBGYN offices
 - Home visiting services
 - First Responders
 - School based health clinics
- Materials such as Welcome Baby Bags and cribs/Pack-n-Plays provided along with education.



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RESULTS – PINELLAS COUNTY

- 2016 and 2017 - 10 Medical Examiner and CADR confirmed deaths due to unsafe sleep.
- Safe sleep initiative started on 2018.
 - Deaths due to unsafe sleep went down to 5
- 2019
 - 6 deaths
- 2020 efforts were postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic.
 - back up to 9 deaths.



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METHODS – DUVAL COUNTY

- The Florida Statewide Child Abuse Death Review team identified Duval County (Jacksonville) as having the highest rate of unsafe sleep deaths per capita.
- Along with the local child abuse death review team, a project was created to deliver 15,000 bags with information about unsafe sleep to parents of every newborn born to the 9 birthing hospitals within the county for an entire calendar year.
- Volunteers helped distribute these bags and materials to all the hospitals.
- NICU and labor and delivery nurses received training, and then used the materials to educate all the mothers whose children were born in 2020.



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METHODS – DUVAL COUNTY

- Training consisted of:
 - Review of safe sleep
 - Review of handout materials
 - A fact sheet to be discussed with parents and what to say



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METHODS – DUVAL COUNTY



- Fact sheet

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RESULTS – DUVAL COUNTY

- Averaging about 25 deaths in the previous 5 years, there have only been 8 deaths for children born in 2020 - in 18 months since the initiation of the program from January 1, 2020.
- While the final count will be available December 31, 2021, the results so far indicate a major reduction in unsafe sleep deaths.
- To date for children born in 2021, there have been 3 deaths

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CONCLUSIONS

- Deaths from unsafe sleep have been stubbornly resistant to prevention
- A comprehensive, countywide nursery education program with supplemental materials can significantly reduce a major cause of child maltreatment deaths

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THANK YOU!

- Vicki Whitfield
 - Pinellas staff
- Duval County Hospitals
- UF – Downtown
 - UF-North
 - Memorial
 - St. Vincent’s – Riverside
 - St. Vincent’s – Southside
 - NAS – JAX Naval Hospital
 - Baptist – Downtown
 - Baptist – South
 - Baptist – Beaches

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