

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Tawnya Simon, RN, BSN, MSA
TITLE: Personal and Preventive Health Services Director
PHONE: (989) 758-3667
EMAIL: tsimon@saginawcounty.com

SAGINAW COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECONGNIZES INFANT SAFE SLEEP AWARENESS MONTH

Governor Gretchen Whitmer has proclaimed September 2019 as Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month in Michigan to highlight the importance of preventing sleep-related infant deaths. In order to recognize this important observance, the Saginaw County Health Department is reminding parents and caregivers of techniques that can help substantially reduce the infant death rate in our county and state.

From 2012 to 2017 in Saginaw County, there were 30 sleep-related infant deaths. Sleep-related deaths are those where the sleep environment was likely to have contributed to the death. In Saginaw County, suffocation is the most common cause of sleep-related death. A safe sleep environment can reduce the risk of all sleep-related infant deaths.

All babies should always be placed to sleep on their backs, never on their sides or tummies, in their own crib, bassinet or pack-n-play for every sleep time. Other lifesaving steps parents and caregivers can take to protect their baby include:

- Use a firm mattress with a tightly-fitted sheet.
- Keep baby's sleep space clutter free - no pillows, blankets or toys.
- Avoid covering baby's head or overheating. Instead of a blanket, consider using a sleep sack, wearable blanket or footed sleeper to keep baby warm.
- Breastfeeding is encouraged.
- Make certain that no one smokes around baby.

There are many resources available. Parents, grandparents, relatives, child care providers and everyone caring for infants are urged to learn more about how to keep babies safe every time they sleep. For more information, parents, professionals and others can visit www.michigan.gov/safesleep. The Saginaw County Health Department also has programs and services available for families wanting to know more about safe sleep. Call 989-758-3845 or visit www.saginawpublichealth.org.

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