



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, HEALTH DEPARTMENT
ANNOUNCE NEW CITYWIDE CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE SAFE SLEEP
PRACTICES FOR FAMILIES WITH INFANTS**

*Central Bronx, High Bridge/Morrisania, Hunts Point/ Mott Haven, and Northeast Bronx have
the highest rates of sleep-related infant deaths*

*ACS and Health Department teams trained over 12,300 frontline child welfare staff, city
workers, parents and other caregivers in safe sleep practices*

ACS frontline staff offers in-home assessments with smartphones and training video

*Health Department home visiting staff provides safe sleep education and cribs for families who
do not have a safe place for their infant to sleep*

May 24, 2017 – The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and the Health Department announced a new citywide campaign today at NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln to promote safe sleep practices for families with infants, building on a community-based training initiative that has seen over 12,300 New Yorkers trained on approved Safe Sleep practices since January 2016.

The new campaign – in English, Spanish, Chinese, French and Haitian Creole – directs parents and caregivers to “*Put them to bed as if their life depends on it. Because it does*” and highlights the reasons why safe sleep recommendations can save lives. The campaign will be featured in bus shelters, hair and nail salons, bodegas and laundromats in East and Central Harlem, throughout Brooklyn and the Bronx, parts of Queens and Staten Island.

In New York City, sleep-related injuries remained one of the leading causes of death among infants, with 40 deaths in 2014 and 48 deaths in 2015 at a combined rate of 36.1 per 100,000 live births for 2014-2015. During this time period, prematurely-born infants (less than 32 weeks) compared to other gestational ages, infants residing in the Bronx compared to other boroughs, and infants whose mothers were 20-29 years of age compared to other age groups, had higher rates of sleep-related injury deaths.

In an effort to focus these trainings in communities with the highest rates of sleep-related infant deaths, ACS' Safe Sleep team has trained over 5,300 fatherhood groups, faith-based



organizations, expectant teens, healthcare professionals, formerly-incarcerated mothers, public housing residents, and homeless families. In the field, the agency's over 2,200 frontline child welfare workers are also able to access ACS' "*A Life To Love*" educational video through new [Smartphones distributed](#) throughout the division.

"Empowering parents to practice safe sleep is a critical part of our Administration's efforts to keep children healthy and safe," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. "I commend the Administration for Children's Services and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for coming together to spread the word about these practices – which will save lives and ensure that every child, in every community, has the same chance at a long and healthy life."

"These initiatives are part of a comprehensive effort to promote safe sleep practices for families with infants," said **ACS Commissioner David Hansell**. "We know that, tragically, the High Bridge/Morrisania is one of the area's most affected by sleep-related deaths. We consider such deaths entirely preventable with public education-- like this bold campaign-- and appropriate and accessible healthcare. We are proud to join the Health Department in this mission, proud to re-launch this campaign at Lincoln Hospital, and proud to continue this vital work in the Bronx."

"Safe sleep practices are life-saving for all newborns, and this renewed effort enlists the help of trusted community members to educate families about these practices," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. "Additionally, by focusing on community engagement and training, we are disseminating this important knowledge to families and connecting them to the resources they need through the Neighborhood Health Action Centers' Family Wellness Suites. We are confident this neighborhood-level approach will be effective in making safe sleep the norm for all moms and their newborns."

"Every family should get to celebrate their newborn's first birthday," said **First Deputy Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. "Sadly, each year approximately 50 of our tiniest New Yorkers die due to a sleep-related cause, which is entirely preventable. This new educational campaign coupled with programming to reach credible messengers in communities most affected is a positive step in remedying a longstanding inequity."

"NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln recognizes the power of community as an important element in the making of strong and healthy families. We are proud to continue supporting the work of the Safe Sleep initiative as part of our ongoing commitment to better health outcomes and providing necessary resources for families in the Bronx," said **Milton Nuñez, Chief Executive Officer, NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln**.

The Health Department provides safe sleep education and supports breastfeeding families in high priority neighborhoods through home visitors from the Department's Newborn Home Visiting Program, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Healthy Start Brooklyn programs. Staff can



connect families to resources and support, including the Department's Healthy Homes Program, to address housing quality issues like heat and rodents that can interfere with safe sleep practices. Through initiatives such as these the Health Department has trained over 7,000 home visitors, city employees, community health workers, parents and infant caregivers in safe sleep practices since January 2016. The Department promotes American Academy of Pediatrics safe sleep recommendations that breastfeeding helps reduce the risk of sleep-related infant deaths.

New Health Department initiatives include:

- **The Champions Program:** A pilot project to train community influencers to be Safe Sleep ambassadors. The Health Department is engaging community members through the Neighborhood Health Action Centers and community partners to recruit grandparents and other trusted community residents to be trained in safe sleep practices. The training employs a newly-created safe sleep curriculum and educational materials and aims to train 100 grandparents and community residents by June 30, 2017.
- **Launch of New Parent Safe Sleep Educational Video:** ACS and the Health Department are jointly creating a resource for NYC Health + Hospitals' hospitals and community health centers, the video will be shown to new parents before hospital discharge. The video will be available at nyc.gov/safesleep and it will be downloadable on smart phones.
- **Safe Sleep Educational Flyer:** The flyer promotes Safe sleep by focusing on the "why": why safe sleep practices make a difference in preventing sleep-related infant deaths. It will be mailed with every birth certificate.

The Health Department's ongoing Safe Sleep activities will continue to be offered at the Neighborhood Health Action Centers, community spaces in East Harlem, Manhattan, Brownsville, Brooklyn and East Tremont in the Bronx. The Neighborhood Health Action Center initiative is revitalizing underused Health Department buildings by co-locating health services, community health centers, public hospital clinical services, community-based organizations and service providers.

"Losing an infant is an unimaginable tragedy, and it is particularly devastating that in recent years Morrisania and Highbridge families have been disproportionately affected by infant sleeping death. I am grateful to the Administration for Children's Services and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for their partnership on the lifesaving Safe Sleep campaign and their efforts to teach safe sleep techniques to parents all over the community," said **Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson**. "Today's announcement of a citywide public awareness safe sleep campaign will bring lifesaving information to families across the five boroughs and allow vital in person trainings to continue in the Bronx. I thank ACS Commissioner David Hansell and DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Mary Bassett for their partnership, leadership, and commitment to the well-being of New York City's children."



According to the 2014 Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System data, the percent of mothers placing their infants to sleep on their back has increased significantly, from 53 percent in 2004 to 66 percent in 2014. Despite improvements over time, disparities among racial groups persist and were statistically significant in 2014: 62 percent of Latina mothers and 58 percent of Black non-Latina mothers put their baby on their back to sleep compared to 75 percent of White mothers.

Infant sleep-related injury deaths involve the following risk factors:

- *Sleep positioning:* Unsafe sleep positioning (placement on the stomach or side) were found in 49 percent of sleep-related infant injury deaths.
- *Bed sharing:* Bed sharing with an adult or other child at the time of death was evidenced in 52 percent of injury deaths.
- *Sleep surface:* Unsafe sleep surfaces (anything other than a crib, bassinet or playpen) were found in 72 percent of sleep-related infant injury cases.
- *Bedding:* Excess/soft bedding or other object in bed was found in 68 percent of sleep-related infant injury deaths.

For more information about NYC ACS, please visit www.nyc.gov/acs, and for more information about NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, please visit www.nyc.gov/health



Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, Dr. Herminia Palacio and ACS Commissioner David Hansell at NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln to promote safe sleep practices for families



**PUT THEM TO BED AS IF THEIR LIFE
DEPENDS ON IT. BECAUSE IT DOES.**

Babies sleep safest on their backs. It makes it easier for them to breathe,
and they are less likely to choke if they spit up.

Babies sleep safest alone, on their backs, in a bare crib or bassinet — not in bed with you.



NO PILLOWS



NO BLANKETS



NO TOYS



NOT ON
THEIR BELLY



NOT IN BED
WITH YOU

To learn more about Safe Sleep visit
nyc.gov/safesleep or call 311.

#NYCSafeSleep



PÓNGALOS A DORMIR COMO SI FUERA UNA CUESTIÓN DE VIDA O MUERTE. PORQUE LO ES.

Los bebés duermen más seguros en una cuna vacía. Prácticas cariñosas pero riesgosas como colocar almohadas, cobijas y juguetes en la cuna de su bebé pueden provocar asfixia y hasta la muerte.

Los bebés duermen más seguros solos, boca arriba, en una cuna o moisés vacíos: no en la cama con usted.



NO ALMOHADAS



NO COBIJAS



NO JUGUETES



NO BOCA ABAJO



NO EN LA CAMA
CON USTED

Para obtener más información sobre el sueño seguro para bebés, visite nyc.gov/safesleep o llame al 311.