



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, July 3, 2017

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**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT
HOST THE 2017 INFANT SAFE SLEEP SUMMIT, A CALL TO ACTION:
ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

More than 150 attend citywide summit to expand stakeholder partnerships & acknowledge racial and economic disparities; Goal is positive outcomes for NYC infants

Working together with communities, City agencies and their partners will develop strategies to promote infant and family health and well-being

New York, NY – Last Friday, the New York City Administration for Children's Services Commissioner David Hansell and Department of Health & Mental Hygiene First Deputy Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot joined Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio and other stakeholders at the New York Academy of Medicine in Manhattan for the **2017 Infant Sleep Summit, a Call to Action: Addressing Racial Equity & Community Engagement**.

The **2017 Infant Sleep Summit** framed and unified the priorities, strategies and messaging to effectively promote key infant safe sleep practices citywide. It also introduced to community partners, hospitals and community agencies, clergy, advocates, policymakers and foundations the new ACS and DOHMH Infant Safe Sleep Campaign tools and materials that debunk myths and misconceptions about sleep-related infant safety practices.

"Parents from every background and walk of life share a common bond – infinite love and tenderness for their babies. Giving parents easily accessible training and guidance on practicing safe sleep habits for their infants lets parents shower all that love even while their babies are sleeping" said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. "The de Blasio Administration is making significant investments in educational tools and training to ensure that every child in New York City has the same chance at a long and healthy life."

"The Safe Sleep initiative is part of a comprehensive effort to promote safe sleep practices for families with infants," said **ACS Commissioner David Hansell**. "Sleep-related deaths are entirely preventable with public education and accessible healthcare, and we are here today to join with our partner agencies, healthcare experts, community-based organizations, faith groups, and more to focus on what we can jointly do to spread this message and ensure the best outcomes for our tiniest New Yorkers."



“It takes a village to raise healthy and happy children, and last week's conference recognizes the ongoing need for dialogue and collaboration to promote safe sleep,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. “The summit addresses the challenges to achieving maternal and infant wellness for all New Yorkers. Through continuing our engagement with stakeholders we can further our work to make safe sleep the norm for all New York City families.”

“The Health Department stands with the Administration for Children’s Services in its commitment to preventing infant deaths,” said **First Deputy Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. “Working with partners—including the healthcare sector, community organizations, residents, and other New York City agencies—is the only way to sustainably prevent sleep-related infant deaths, which tragically take the lives of approximately 50 of our Littlest New Yorkers every year.”

On average, one child dies each week in New York City as a result of unsafe sleeping conditions like sharing a bed with an infant or placing objects in the crib. While unsafe sleep practices touch all ethnicities, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds, communities in Central and Northeastern sections of the Bronx, as well as Central Brooklyn are disproportionately.

In 2015, thanks to Mayor de Blasio, ACS took an important step in expanding and energizing its work to prevent unsafe sleep conditions by creating a dedicated Safe Sleep Team with outreach members focused in neighborhoods in high risk areas. The Safe Sleep Team has trained over 5,300 community members, families, foster parents, healthcare staff, and others on safe sleep practices and other important infant safety information. 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.

Working together with DOHMH, ACS launched a new multifaceted public awareness campaign last month – in English, Spanish, Chinese, French and Haitian Creole – that makes clear that our babies’ lives depend on safe sleep. This campaign features posters at over 530 locations across the city, particularly in highest risk zip codes, and at over 80 bus shelters. The joint campaign also disseminates 40,000 brochures in the five languages.

To reach as many families as possible, the campaign will also include a Safe Sleep educational video which will be shown to new parents at NYC Health + Hospitals’ hospitals and community health centers before discharge. This resource will provide new parents with information on best safe sleep practices for their infant. The video will be available at nyc.gov/safesleep and it will be downloadable on smart phones.

City agencies and community-based partners made a commitment during the summit to address conditions that serve as barriers to safe sleep— from housing, access to healthcare, and other resources that when addressed, allow families and children to thrive. Working together with



communities citywide, the goal is to raise awareness, empower families, and develop strategies to promote infant and family health and well-being.

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.

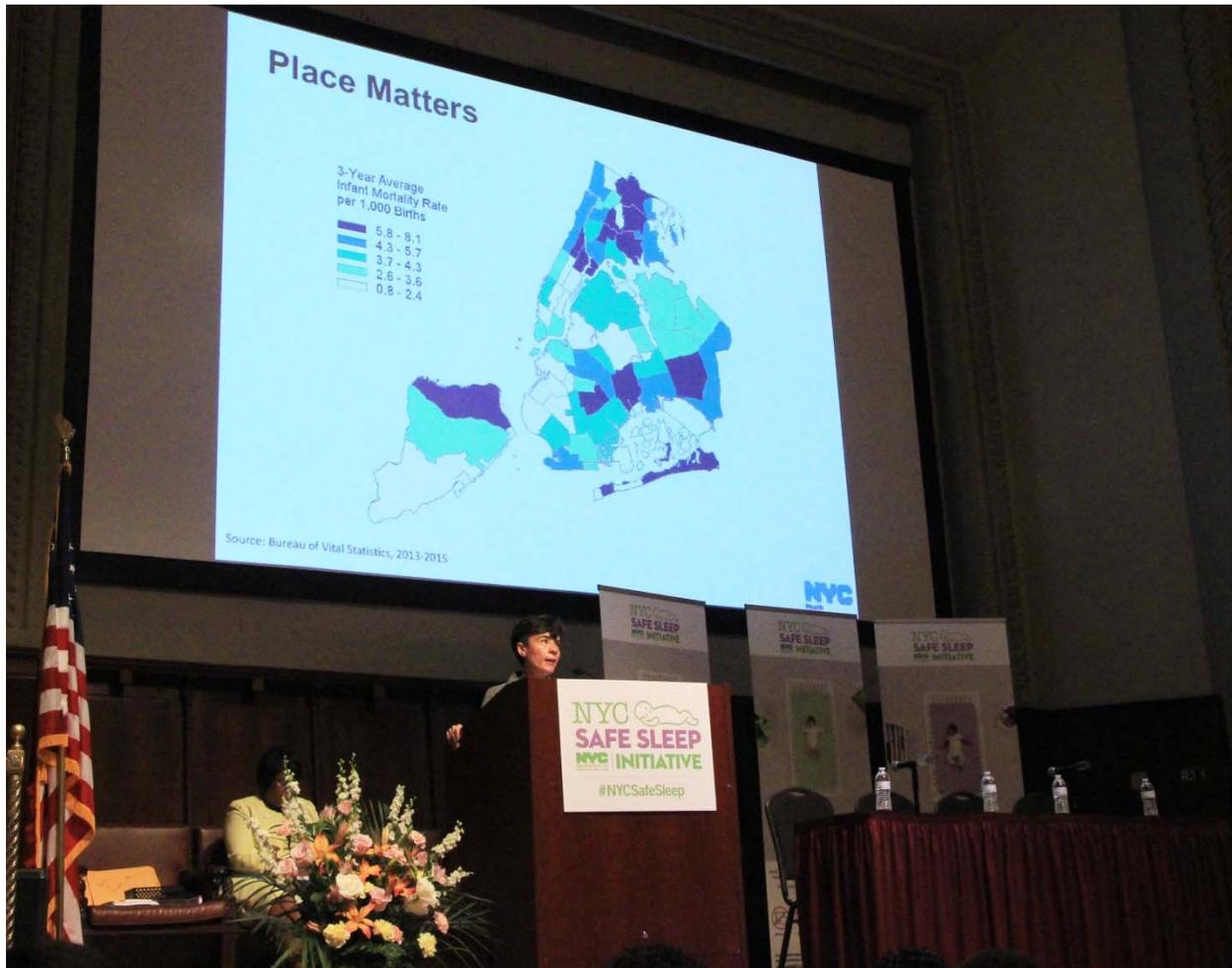
Infant sleep-related injury deaths involve the following risk factors:

- *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.

About the New York City Administration for Children's Services:

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects and promotes safety and well-being of New York City's children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. In child welfare, ACS contracts with private nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize families at risk of a crisis through preventive services, and provides foster care services for children not able to safely remain at home. ACS is aggressively implementing a [Foster Care Strategic Blueprint](#) to improve outcomes for children in foster care. The most recent status report indicates a 25% increase of children achieving permanency through kinship guardianship and a 5% increase in children adopted from FY 2015 to FY 2016, even as the overall number of children in foster care continued to decline, among other significant progress made to improve case practice and outcomes for children and families in the foster care system. In juvenile justice, ACS manages and funds services including detention and placement, intensive community-based alternatives for youth, and support services for families. In early care and education, ACS coordinates and funds programs and vouchers for close to 100,000 children eligible for subsidized care.

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



Dr. Oxiris Barbot from the DOHMH at the 2017 Infant Sleep Summit, a Call to Action: Addressing Racial Equity & Community Engagement.



ACS Commissioner David Hansell and Ericka Moore from DOHMH at the 2017 Infant Sleep Summit, a Call to Action: Addressing Racial Equity & Community Engagement.



NYC ACS and DOHMH panelists at the 2017 Infant Sleep Summit, a Call to Action: Addressing Racial Equity & Community Engagement.

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