



# State of Louisiana

## Department of Health and Hospitals Maternal and Child Health Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
October 1, 2009

MEDIA CONTACT:  
Erica Normand, 504-561-7469  
Erica@trumpetgroup.com

### **OCTOBER IS NATIONAL SIDS AWARENESS MONTH**

#### **Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Announces Its My Fair Baby Shower to be held at the Lake Charles Civic Center**

*Lake Charles Region Kicks-Off 12-Month Campaign Dedicated to SIDS and Safe Sleep Awareness*

Lake Charles, LA – As part of the 12-month, **SIDS and Safe Sleep Awareness** campaign, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Region V office announces its “**My Fair Baby Shower**.” The year’s premiere event will be the *My Fair Baby Shower* and will include demonstrations, a fashion show, make-over opportunities, prizes and a plethora of information on how to keep babies safe during their sleeping hours. **The event will be held at the Lake Charles Civic Center in the Jean Lafitte Room on October 10, 2009, from 10am to 2pm.**

Monthly events will also be held from January 2010 – August 2010, covering topics such as co-sleeping, back sleeping, smoke-free living, breastfeeding and safe cribs.

SIDS, or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, is the third leading cause of infant deaths in the United States, and Louisiana continues to have one of the highest rates of SIDS deaths in the country. In Louisiana, 77 babies died from SIDS in 2005 alone. This amounts to 1.3 deaths per 1,000 live births, which is more than twice the national average of 0.5 deaths per 1,000 live births. This tragedy occurs when a baby appears healthy, but for no apparent reason, dies during sleep. SIDS can occur in all types of families regardless of race, ethnic background, or socioeconomic level.

**How can SIDS be prevented?** Prevention begins with education; and education starts with getting the correct information out to those who have direct contact with babies and infants, including mothers, fathers, grandparents and other caregivers. While there is no way to prevent SIDS from occurring, some SIDS deaths may be prevented by ensuring that all babies have a safe sleep environment and following these SIDS risk reduction behaviors:

- Placing babies to sleep on their backs, alone, and on a firm sleep surface
- Avoiding loose bedding and soft items in cribs
- Not smoking when pregnant or around the baby
- Not overheating or over-bundling the baby
- Breastfeeding
- Using a pacifier at naptime and bedtime for babies under one year of age (start after baby is 1 month old if breastfeeding)

“While the exact cause of SIDS is unknown we can address ways to reduce the risk of SIDS ” says Dr. Hosea Doucet, *SIDS Medical Director*, “Our goal is to promote education on this topic not only to parents, but to anyone who may have day-to-day contact with infants.”

For more information about SIDS, please contact Kristie Bardell, Program Coordinator, at (504) 568-3504 or call the national *Partners for Healthy Babies* at 1-800-251-BABY (2229).

The Maternal Child Health Program within the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals works to assure that pregnant women, women of childbearing age, infants, children, and youth in Louisiana have access to high quality primary and preventive health care services. MCH supports Louisiana Safe Kids, Inc., Partners for Healthy Babies and the Louisiana SIDS Risk Reduction and Safe Sleep Program. For more information, please visit the web site: [www.1800251baby.org](http://www.1800251baby.org)

###