



State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals
Maternal and Child Health Program

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Southwestern Louisiana Safe Sleep Campaign Kicks Off September 10, 2009 Full Year of Engaging Events Planned to Focus on SIDS Awareness & Safe Sleeping

Baton Rouge, LA - Three Louisiana physicians committed to increasing public awareness about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and safe sleep environments for infants will be among the speakers at the SIDS Awareness and Safe Sleep Summit Thursday, September 10, from 9 to 11:45am in the Lake Charles Civic Center Contraband Rm.

The free summit will take place during *National Infant Mortality Awareness Month* (September) and will focus on SIDS and infant deaths that occur in unsafe sleep environments. SIDS and unsafe sleep practices are among the leading causes of infant death in Louisiana and the nation.

Hosea Doucet, MD, of the Tulane Hospital for Children; Gina Lagarde, MD, Child Health Medical Director for the Louisiana Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program; and Bertrand Foch, MD, Regional Administrator and Regional Medical Director of the Southwest Louisiana Office of Public Health (OPH) will be joined by OPH Regional Social Worker Estelle Hileman, LCSW, and SIDS Risk Reduction and Safe Sleep Program Coordinator for the Louisiana MCH Program Kristie Bardell, MPH, as featured speakers. A news conference will follow at 12:30 p.m.

Speakers will discuss risk factors associated with SIDS and unsafe infant sleep practices, and participants will come away with resources to share with family members, friends and coworkers about practical ways to reduce the risks of sudden infant death in their families and communities. Nurses, physicians, and daycare providers are eligible to receive continuing education credits for attending the event. Parents, foster parents, grandparents, social workers, representatives of faith-based and civic organizations, emergency responders, public health professionals, students in health-related fields, educators, elected officials, mental health professionals and concerned citizens are invited to participate.

Donations of new safe-sleep baby items will be accepted at the summit and will be distributed at the first-ever *My Fair Baby Safe Sleep Baby Shower* to be held at the Lake Charles Civic Center on October 10. Suggested donations include safe-sleep sacks (also known as wearable blankets), non-latex pacifiers, pack 'n' play portable baby beds and fitted sheets for baby beds and pack 'n' plays.

To register for the free event go to <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/publications.asp?ID=222> on the web. For more information about registration, contact Alisa Stevens at (337) 475-3219 or Nancy Roach at (337) 475-3224 at the Region V Office of Public Health.

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