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State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor

DATE: October 19, 2020

TO: CALIFORNIA HOSPITALS AND LICENSED MIDWIVES

SUBJECT: PROVIDING SUDDEN UNEXPECTED INFANT DEATH (SUID)/SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME (SIDS) RISK REDUCTION INFORMATION TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS OF NEWBORN INFANT(S)

This letter is in reference to California Health and Safety Code Section 1254.6 (HSC § 1254.6), which requires all hospitals in California to provide Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID)/Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) risk reduction information to all parents or guardians of newborns, upon discharge from the hospital or in the event of a home birth by a licensed midwife. Enacted on July 1, 1998 pursuant to AB 757, HSC § 1254.6 is available here: [HSC Section 1254.6](#)

Hospitals and midwives may use existing materials, or may develop materials, as long as the information is consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Policy Statement, [SIDS and Other Sleep-Related Infant Deaths: Updated 2016 Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment](#) endorsed by the CDPH/MCAH Division and the California SIDS Advisory Council.

In addition to the AAP recommendations, the CDPH/MCAH Division developed [Infant Safe Sleep Strategies](#), a document which supports a family-centered approach to sharing risk reduction and infant safe sleep information, while promoting breastfeeding. The *Infant Safe Sleep Strategies* outlines a five-step approach for public health staff, local stakeholders, and all who work with pregnant and parenting families, to promote the AAP recommendations, help families understand the recommendations and why they matter, hold family-centered conversations about infant safe sleep practices, recommend and support breastfeeding, and educate families about the benefits of room-sharing. The document also addresses the need to increase cultural competency among providers to better serve all families throughout California. The *Infant Safe Sleep Strategies* can be found on the CDPH/MCAH website and is provided in the aforementioned link.



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Since the implementation of national and local public health campaigns, the enactment of HSC § 1254.6, and the safe sleep education efforts by many health professionals, the rate of SUID/SIDS had steadily declined from a rate of 62.2 in 1999 to a rate of 45.3 per 100,000 live births in 2015. However, in recent years, there has been a slight increase to 48.4 per 100,000 live births in 2018, emphasizing the need to continue providing risk reduction and safe infant sleep information and education to all pregnant and parenting families in California.

If you would like additional information, need assistance in obtaining SUID/SIDS risk reduction and infant safe sleep information, materials or professional training resources, please contact the California SIDS Program at (800) 369-SIDS (7437) or e-mail at SIDS@cdph.ca.gov

Thank you very much for your work to keep infants safe, and for providing SUID/SIDS risk reduction and infant safe sleep information to pregnant and parenting families. Your efforts have made a difference in the rate of SUID/SIDS throughout the State and continue to be needed to reduce the risk of infants dying suddenly and unexpectedly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Amian', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Romeo Amian
Acting Chief,
Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division
Center for Family Health
Department of Public Health