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For immediate release

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State Recognizes October as Safe Sleep Awareness Month *More than 80 percent of sudden unexpected infant deaths in N.M. are potentially preventable*

SANTA FE – New Mexico recognizes October as Safe Sleep Awareness Month. The New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) along with Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology, the Office of Injury Prevention and community partners of the Safe Sleep Collaborative proposed the [proclamation](#), which was executed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s office. The goal is to promote safe sleep habits for infants and their caregivers in New Mexico.

As reported by the New Mexico Vital Records and Health Statistics, Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) is the third leading cause of infant death overall in New Mexico. On average, 22 infant lives are lost each year due SUID. More than eight in 10 of these deaths are identified as preventable because of unsafe sleep factors.

“Every infant loss is a tragedy and practicing safe sleep habits can help prevent loss of life,” said **DOH Deputy Cabinet Secretary Laura Parajon M.D.** “Family and caregivers should always follow safe sleep guidelines to reduce risk of SUID.”

Practicing safe sleep guidelines from the [American Academy of Pediatrics Safe Sleep recommendations](#) can help to prevent SUIDs. When possible, infants should sleep in their parent or caregiver’s room on a separate sleep surface that was designed for infants, such as a crib, bassinet or playard. Additionally, parents and caregivers should

- Always place infants to sleep on their backs
- Always use a firm, flat, non-inclined surface
- Always dress infants appropriately to avoid overheating
- Always keep soft objects like pillows, bumpers, blankets and soft toys away from the infant’s sleep area
- Always provide a smoke free environment for infants and children (for more information on providing a smoke free environment visit [Nicotine Use and Prevention and Control Program](#))

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths (SUIDS) are the leading cause of infant death in the post-neonatal period, 28 days of age to one year. Anyone who cares for infants should learn more about Safe Sleep practices at [healthychildren.org](#) or [cribsforkids.org](#).

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NMDOH

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The Department of Health works to promote health and wellness, improve health outcomes, and deliver services to all New Mexicans. As New Mexico's largest state agency, DOH offers public health services in all 33 counties and collaborates with 23 Native American tribes, Pueblos and nations.