



Department of Health
J. Howard Beard Health Services Building
3 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

Douglas L. Hart
Acting Health Officer

May 2009

Dear Colleague:

High infant mortality rates continue to be a concern in Anne Arundel County, particularly racial and ethnic disparities. The Anne Arundel County Department of Health and the Anne Arundel County Healthy Babies Coalition have identified preterm birth/low birth weight and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome among the leading causes of infant morbidity and mortality in the County. To address these and other infant health issues, we have developed resources that are available at no cost to County health care providers.

Anne Arundel County's rate of infant death due to preterm birth/low birth weight is 193.5 deaths per 1,000 live births (2001-2005 data), which is higher than in Maryland (177.3). The County rates are also substantially higher than in the United States (113.8) where preterm birth/low birth weight is the second leading cause of infant deaths. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the third leading cause of death among infants (newborn to 12 months) in Maryland and Anne Arundel County, behind prematurity and birth defects. Between 2003 and 2008, 36 infants died from SIDS in our County alone.

Please partner with us to educate the families in your practice about these important topics. The Department of Health and the Coalition have developed a number of resources available to you and your patients including:

- Free materials about fetal movement counts, preterm labor, calming a crying baby, child car safety seats, home safety and safe sleep. Samples of these materials are enclosed with this letter. They can be ordered for your office by using the enclosed Healthy Babies Materials Order Form.
- Information for parents and caregivers available on the Healthy Moms and Healthy Babies Web page at www.aahealth.org/healthybabies.asp or by calling The Family Tree Tot's Line at 1-877-817-TOTS(8687).
- The Keeping Babies Safe Training Web page at www.aahealth.org/keepingbabiesafe.asp. This Web page provides information, tools and resources to help educate pregnant women and parents about how to keep babies safe from injuries during infancy and early childhood. Current topics available include safe sleep, calming a crying baby, home safety and car safety.

Our goal is for all babies to be born healthy and thrive the first year and beyond. As clinicians, we can make a difference. If you would like to join the Healthy Babies Coalition or for more information, please visit http://aahealth.org/healthybabies_co.asp. Thank you for your help.

Regards,

Jinlene Chan, MD, MPH
Acting Deputy Health Officer for Public Health