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## News Release

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John R. Kasich / Governor  
Lance D. Himes / Interim Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ABCs of Safe Sleep Campaign Aims to Save Infant Lives**

As part of the agency's priority to reduce infant mortality, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) today announced the launch of a statewide awareness campaign to help reduce the number of Ohio babies who die in unsafe sleep environments. Three Ohio babies die in unsafe sleep environments each week, with 819 infant deaths from 2007-2011.

The goal of the infant safe sleep campaign is to educate mothers, fathers and grandparents in high-rate infant mortality areas of Ohio on the importance of putting their babies to sleep using the ABCs of safe sleep: **Alone. On Their Back. In a Crib.**

"Reducing infant deaths is a top priority of the state health agency and many of our partners," said ODH interim director, Lance Himes. "Our comprehensive outreach efforts are designed to educate parents and other caregivers on simple steps they can take to save precious lives."

Sleep-related infant deaths occur suddenly and unexpectedly in a sleep environment. They include sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), accidental suffocation in sleep environments and undetermined causes. Sleep-related deaths are the leading cause of death between one month and one year of age. All infants in unsafe sleep environments such as those sharing an adult bed are at risk. Providing a clear consistent message encouraging all families to always place their babies to sleep alone, on their back in a safe environment is an important step in reducing infant mortality in Ohio.

Parents and caregivers can reduce the risk of these sudden, unexpected deaths by following the ABCs of safe sleep: **Alone, on their Back and in a Crib.**

The campaign will use multi-layered mediums to reach the target audiences in our high-risk areas, including billboards, cable, transit, Internet and radio. A new safe sleep website: [www.safesleep.ohio.gov](http://www.safesleep.ohio.gov) with educational materials such as a PSA, poster, brochure and flyer, show how to provide a safe sleep environment so that parents and caregivers can reduce the risk of sleep-related infant death. The campaign and messaging were developed following input received from 12 focus groups with Ohio parents around the state. ODH also plans to expand access to safe sleep environments by supporting Cribs for Kids sites in high-risk areas of Ohio.

For more information, visit [SafeSleep.Ohio.gov](http://SafeSleep.Ohio.gov) to learn *why* of the ABCs of infant safe sleep are safest for baby.

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