



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'Operation SAFE SLEEP' Looks to Keep County Babies 'Safe & Sound' Public Health Sees "Baby Boxes" as Key Tool Against SIDS

April 26, 2017 - Clear Creek County Communications, Co. — Clear Creek County Public Health looks to help new parents sleep soundly, along with their newborns. Seeking an 'old world' solution to an age-old problem, the idea of "baby boxes", used in Finland since 1938, is gaining ground around the U.S. in greatly reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), the number of SIDS deaths in 1993 was 4,669, and reduced to 1,545 in 2014—a more than 60% decrease. Yet, during the same time period, the rate of infant deaths from other sleep-related causes increased from 903 in 1994, to 1,945 in 2014—more than a thousand deaths more, in the U.S.

Enter the Baby Box. Today, the Finnish Government offers every new mother a cardboard box—complete with a mattress, fitted sheet, a blanket and other accessories. And, Finland has one of the world's lowest infant mortality rates. According to the Central Intelligence Agency's World Fact Book (CIA.gov), Finland ranks 220 out of 225 countries—at 2.50 deaths per 1,000 live births. The U.S., by comparison, ranks 169, with 5.80 deaths per 1,000 live births. And, according to the NIH, SIDS is the leading cause of death among babies between 1 month and 1 year of age.

"Although SIDS and other-related infant deaths are rare here, the chance to use this proven technique and educate our new mothers on proper infant care is something we're excited to try," said Crystal Brandt, County Public Health Nurse.

And, the idea is catching on in other states. Currently, Alabama, Ohio and New Jersey are all promoting free, safe sleep programs through the California-based Baby Box Co., to include educational videos, information and thousands of boxes. The idea is simple: infant deaths occur most often when the baby is sleeping. According to the NIH, it's not due to the cribs themselves necessarily, but due to the sleep environment.

WebMD.com recommends several steps to help prevent SIDS:

- Place a sleeping baby on his back—for naps, at night, anytime.
- Have a firm bed, no soft toys or bedding.
- Don't smoke around a baby
- Keep your sleeping baby close, but not in the same bed
- Breastfeed as long as you can—lowers risk of SIDS by as much as 50%
- Immunize your baby
- Keep your baby from overheating—use of “onesie”, pajamas—never blankets
- Don't give honey to an infant under 1 year old
- Always consult your health care provider with any questions or concerns

“We are really pleased to offer this critical program to our new mothers, and know it will make a difference in someone's life,” Brandt added.

For more information on the NIH's Safe to Sleep ® program:

<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/sts/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information, contact Crystal Brandt at: cbrandt@co.clear-creek.co.us, or 303-670-7545.

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