



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## 'Operation SAFE SLEEP' Kicks Off, "Baby Boxes" Given to New Parents as Key Tool to Help Prevent SIDS and Infant Mortality

**Aug. 1, 2017 - Clear Creek County Communications, Co.** — Clear Creek County Public Health began handing out "baby boxes" recently, courtesy of the California-based Baby Box Co., a for-profit maker of the boxes similar to the ones used in Finland since 1938. The campaign is quickly gaining ground around the U.S. and Colorado, and Denver Public Health was one of the first to try out the boxes earlier this year. Per their website, "...According to data from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, sleep-related deaths in infants are now the leading cause of death for children in Colorado."

And, Colorado statistics coincide with a rising national average. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), the number of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (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—a thousand plus 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 baby boxes are good for our County families who are often mobile, or living in small quarters where there isn’t much room for cribs,” 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 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—it 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 incredibly excited about this,” said Jennifer Clary, the CEO and co-founder of The Baby Box Co. “We’ve been working a long time to bring this to fruition in Colorado,” per a July 12, 2017, Denver Post article (John Ingold, reporting).

New and expectant moms, parents-to-be, and everyone can watch a Colorado-specific video on The Baby Box Co.’s Baby Box University website <https://www.babyboxuniversity.com/>, according to Brandt. “After that, they can come to the Idaho Springs resource center and receive a free baby box. It’s all about educating our new parents,” she added.

“I am very happy to have gotten a baby box and to be a part of the program,” said Allison Sprague, Clear Creek County resident. “I am excited to see how this pans out, and hopeful we have the same results as Finland...”

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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](mailto:cbrandt@co.clear-creek.co.us), or 303-670-7545.

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Baby Box tailored for Colorado.



Allison Sprague (left), and her sister, Sierra Walcott, show off their new baby boxes, along with their new babies, Landon and Saxon. The sisters were amongst the first to receive baby boxes in Clear Creek County.