

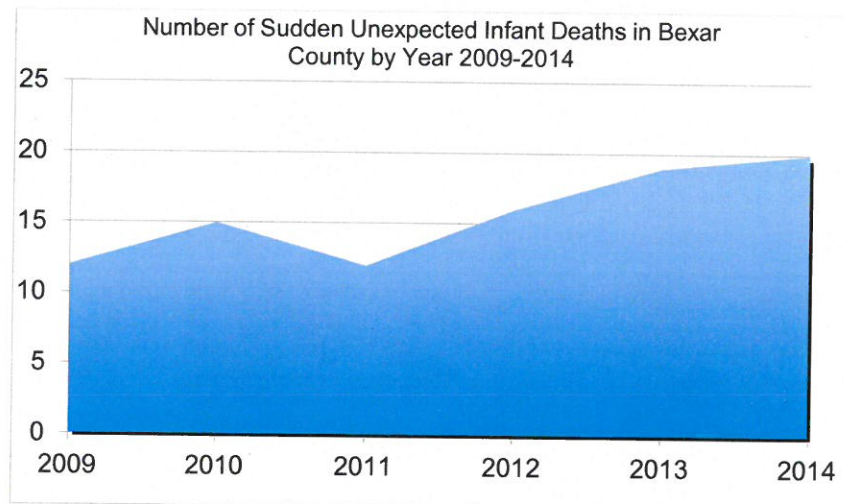


## San Antonio Metropolitan Health District

October 5, 2015

Dear San Antonio Provider,

We would like to inform you of an alarming recurrence of preventable infant deaths in our community. Bexar County is currently experiencing a steady rise in sudden unexplained infant deaths (SUID) due to unsafe sleep practices since 2009. In 2009, twelve infants died from SUID. Thus far, fifteen infant deaths have been reviewed for 2015.



[http://home.bexar.org/medicalexaminer/annual\\_reports.html](http://home.bexar.org/medicalexaminer/annual_reports.html)

Six neonatologists across the city have united in creating the Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy Coalition Team at the request of the Bexar County Child Fatality Review Team (BCCFRT). This volunteer task force is leading initiatives to focus on standardization and consistency of safe sleep education processes within each of their hospital systems by engaging the appropriate medical and nursing providers and following recommendations set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The members of the task force are:

Christine Aune, MD – Baptist Health System  
Cynthia Blanco, MD – University Health System  
Nicholas Carr, MD – San Antonio Military Medical Center  
Sanjie Garza-Cox, MD – CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System  
Katie Johnson, MD – Methodist Health System  
Tania Hernandez, MD – Southwest General Hospital

For information on the task force, please contact Laurie Charles, BCCFRT coordinator, by phone at (210)704-3330 or email at [laurie.charles@christushealth.org](mailto:laurie.charles@christushealth.org).

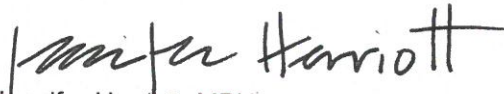
Although, all the hospitals in our community provide safe sleep education to the families during the hospitalization of their newborn, we urge you to reinforce safe sleeping practices during every infant encounter. We need you and your staff to create awareness on the requirements of a safe sleep environment for those under one year of age. Free educational materials are available from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/sts/materials/Pages/default.aspx>).

These are tips from the Safe to Sleep® Campaign on how to create a safe sleep environment for babies:

- Placing your baby on his or her back to sleep for every sleep time
- Using a firm sleep surface, like a mattress in a safety-approved crib, covered with a fitted sheet
- Not letting your baby sleep on soft surfaces (like an adult bed, sofa, or couch)
- Sharing a room with your baby, but not a bed
- Making sure nothing covers your baby's face or head
- Keeping pillows, blankets, or crib bumpers out of your baby's sleep area
- Not smoking or letting others smoke around your baby
- Dressing your baby in sleep clothing and not using a blanket
- Breastfeeding your baby

I look forward to us working in concert to address this issue that is affecting our community, and protecting infants to ensure they have a bright future.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Herriott, MPH  
Assistant Director of Community Health