

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



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Dear Providers,

On average, one infant every month dies in Maine due to being placed in unsafe sleeping conditions. In response to this issue, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services launched a [Safe Sleep campaign](#), which we first [announced in April](#). It includes an updated [website](#) and digital, [social media](#), [television](#) and radio ads. We are reaching out to providers who work with parents in treatment programs for substance use disorder in hopes that you will share the campaign and its message with your clients. Some of you have already been sharing this information. We thank you for all of your work.

The campaign promotes the A, B, Cs of Safe Sleep, which state that babies should be:

- A. **ALONE** in a crib
- B. On their **BACK** for nights and naps
- C. Placed in a clean, clear **CRIB**
- D. Cared for in a **Drug-Free Home** - by aware, not impaired, caregivers

Our goal is for the campaign to reach all new parents in Maine, including families at increased risk.

Unsafe sleep is one of two overarching trends that continue to put Maine children at risk of serious harm. From January 1, 2014 to March 31, 2019, [45 percent](#) of child deaths in Maine (48 of 107) reported to the Department through the child protective system were related to unsafe sleep environments. The other major trend putting children at risk is substance use disorder. Substance use by a parent or caregiver makes bed-sharing and other unsafe sleep practices even more dangerous for babies. A Maine Medical Center review of records from 32 Maine deaths between 2015 and 2017 found that half of babies who died in an unsafe sleep environment were noted to be either drug/alcohol-exposed at birth or had parents who abused substances after the baby was born.

We aim to reach all families with infants with this message about the importance of safe sleep, regardless of whether they are involved with child protective services. We want parents to know that substance use – from alcohol to over-the-counter medications to prescription or illicit drugs – can pose a risk to safe sleep for infants. Importantly, we also want to support parents seeking recovery and treatment for substance use disorder as we spread this message.

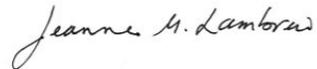
We hope you can provide information on safe sleep to your clients and those who provide care for children under the age of one. You are a crucial part of this effort.

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The SafeSleepforME.org website provides information for families and providers about safe sleep. It also includes links to other resources, such as the [Maine Prevention Store](#), where free brochures, rack cards, posters, and more are available. These materials are designed to educate the public, parents, and professionals on a variety of topics, including safe sleep.

Thank you for your time and consideration as we work to spread the message about safe sleep for Maine's youngest residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne M. Lambrew". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jeanne Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner

JML/klv