



**555 Towner St., P.O. Box 0915
Ypsilanti, MI 48197-0915
Phone (734) 544-6700**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 09/12/2008

Contact: **Ruth Kraut** Coalition for Infant Mortality Reduction Coordinator,
Washtenaw County Public Health Department

E-mail: krautr@ewashtenaw.org

Phone: (734) 544-3068

Contact: **Susan Lee**, Director of Nursing, Washtenaw County Public Health Department

E-mail: leesu@ewashtenaw.org

Phone: (734) 544-3084

HEALTH DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGES SAFER SLEEP PRACTICES FOR INFANTS

YPSILANTI, Mich., September 11, 2008 — Healthy infants in Michigan are at risk of dying due to unsafe sleep practices. Governor Jennifer Granholm has declared September as Infant Safe Sleep Month in Michigan to help stem the growing tide of deaths caused by infants sleeping in unsafe environments. According to Susan Lee, Director of Nursing at the Washtenaw County Public Health Department, “At one time, the medical community believed that Sudden Infant Death Syndrome could not be prevented. As a result of diligent public health surveillance, we now know that many of those deaths were suffocation-related, due to unsafe sleep practices.”

Infant unsafe sleep deaths are the third most common and most preventable cause of infant death. Officials estimate that one child dies every week in Michigan due to unsafe sleep practices which include deaths from adults rolling onto babies; soft bedding suffocating babies; and unintentional strangulation deaths. Notes Lee; “These deaths are preventable. Parents can follow simple ABC guidelines: Babies should sleep Alone, on his or her Back, and in a Crib.” Putting babies to sleep on soft surfaces, such as couches or adult beds, is particularly dangerous. Parents and caregivers in Washtenaw County can prevent unsafe sleep deaths by practicing these simple techniques.

These are not just statistics," said Sandra Frank, executive director of Tomorrow's Child. "A baby's death absolutely devastates the family, and the loss to the community is immeasurable."

For more information, materials and training contact Ruth Kraut, Infant Mortality Coalition Coordinator, at 734-544-3068.

You can find more information at the Washtenaw County Infant Mortality Coalition:

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public_health/cimr/cimr.html

###