

Suozzi Launches 'Babies Sleep Safest Alone' Campaign in Nassau County Statewide Program Aims to Prevent Infant Deaths

BABIES SLEEP SAFEST ALONE

Mineola, NY – Nassau County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi, in partnership with New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Gladys Carrión, today announced Nassau County's participation in "Babies Sleep Safest Alone," the statewide campaign to stop a preventable crisis: infants dying while sharing a bed with adults. The goal is to educate parents and caregivers on the importance of infants sleeping alone.

"These deaths are avoidable," said County Executive Suozzi. "If even one parent hears our message and stops sleeping in the same bed with their baby, we have succeeded."

There have been 90 infant or small child death reports to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment since 2006, where the child was co-sleeping with a parent, sibling, or caregiver, according to the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. Co-sleeping is risky – if an adult or child rolls over on a baby, the baby can be hurt or even suffocated.

"Since 2006, we have had two such related deaths in Nassau County. Educating the public will eliminate these needless deaths," stated Nassau County Social Services Commissioner John E. Imhof.

"Educating parents and caregivers about the potentially deadly consequences of sleeping with small children will be crucial in preventing these tragic deaths and injuries," said Suffolk County Social Services Commissioner Janet DeMarzo.

"Just over a dozen small children died so far this year in beds they were sharing with their caregivers," said OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrión. "These may have been preventable deaths. New York, counties, and health care providers are joining together to educate parents and avoid another co-sleeping tragedy."

Three-quarters of the children involved in co-sleeping incidents were newborn to three months old. Though both mothers and fathers from every age group who sleep in the same bed with their babies put them at risk, the most common occurrence of co-sleeping incidents were with young mothers.

The "Babies Sleep Safest Alone" public education campaign will include statewide TV and radio launches and distribution of 200,000 English and Spanish-language posters and pamphlets to doctors' offices, hospitals, birthing centers, family resource centers, Red Cross babysitter training program locations and county social services and health offices.

For more information on the "Babies Sleep Safest Alone" campaign, please visit www.ocfs.state.ny.us/babiessleepsafestalone or call 1 (800) 345-KIDS.

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