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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** Director of Family Prevention and Education

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**Awareness Campaign Focuses on Infant Safe Sleep**

October is "Safe Sleep Month" in Michigan and LACASA Center’s Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Council and the Livingston County Health Department are working to protect babies by raising awareness about safe sleep practices.

“The CAP Council wants to ensure that every parent, grandparent, and caregiver is aware that the safest sleep environment is when infants are put to sleep alone, on their back, and in their own crib or bassinet,” said Holly Naylor, LACASA’s Director of Family Prevention and Education. “Sharing information about the most current safe sleep guidelines is a crucial step in making sure no family experiences loss related to preventable sleep-related injuries or death.”

“Since 2015 there have been seven sleep-related infant deaths in Livingston County,” said Rebecca Leach, Director of Personal and Preventive Health Services/Deputy Health Officer for the Livingston County Health Department. “Our goal is to reach a point where that number is zero every year.”

Leach recommends that parents and infant caregivers follow these infant safety recommendations:

* Place baby alone on their back, in a crib, bassinet or pack n' play for every sleep time - nap time and night time
* Use a firm mattress with a tightly fitted sheet
* Keep baby's sleep space clutter free - no pillows, blankets or toys
* Breastfeed, if you can
* Keep baby's sleep space where you can see and hear them. Share your room, not your bed
* Avoid covering baby's head or overheating. Instead of a blanket, consider using a sleep sack, wearable blanket or footed sleeper to keep baby warm
* Remind everyone who cares for your baby, including babysitters and family members, how to keep baby safe while sleeping

- More -

Livingston County residents can learn more about safe sleep by visiting the Howell Carnegie and Hartland Cromaine libraries to see safe sleep displays, following LACASA’s Facebook page to see safe-sleep related posts, and taking an online infant safety class*, S.C.D- Sleeping Crying Driving,* which can be found at lacasacenter.org.

According to the [**American Academy of Pediatrics**](http://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/AAP-Expands-Guidelines-for-Infant-Sleep-Safety-and-SIDS-Risk-Reduction.aspx), about one in five deaths due to sudden infant death syndrome occur while an infant is in the care of someone other than a parent. For that reason, parents are urged not only to engage in safe sleep practices at home, but to share that information with everyone who cares for their baby.

**Safe sleep steps** recommended by the Health Department can be found on the[**Michigan Department of Human Services**](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,4562,7-124-5453_7124_57836---,00.html)website. In addition, it is important for parents to understand how dangerous other sleeping situations can be. The Department of Human Services offers these warnings:

* Babies are NOT safe sleeping on a couch, pillow or anything soft
* Babies are NOT safe sleeping with other children, adults or pets
* Babies are NOT safe sleeping in adult beds; if you feed your baby in bed, put your baby back into his/her crib to sleep

For more information about safe sleep for infants, contact **LACASA’s CAP Council** at **517-548-1350, or** the Livingston County Health Department at 517-546-9850.

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**ABOUT LACASA**

LACASA Center is a locally-based nonprofit organization that provides support services for victims of child abuse and interpersonal violence. LACASA offers educational programs aimed at protecting children in Livingston County. Visit lacasacenter.org for more information.