


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Leana Wen, Commissioner	Health Department AGENCY REPORT	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	18-0061R – Investigative Hearing – Increased Infant Mortality Rate		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o 409 City Hall

January 25, 2018

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review 18-0061R – Investigative Hearing – Increased Infant Mortality Rate. The purpose of this investigative hearing is to allow BCHD to inform the Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee on BCHD services aimed at reducing infant mortality resulting from unsafe sleep environments.

Between 2009 and 2016, 122 babies in Baltimore died in their sleep. Almost every time (95%), the baby was sleeping in an unsafe sleep environment. This includes babies who died while sleeping on an adult bed or a sofa, in soft bedding, on their stomach or side, or with heavy blankets or pillows in the crib. Sleep-related death is the second leading reason why babies die in Baltimore City, after complications related to preterm birth and low-birth weight. Sleep-related infant deaths are overwhelmingly preventable. Babies should sleep alone, without any parents or siblings. Babies should be put to sleep on their back and in a crib. The crib should be clean and clear of any toys, crib bumpers or blankets. There should be no smoking in the house.

Since the launch of B'more for Health Babies in 2009, the number of sleep-related infant deaths has decreased by 74%. This has been due to the efforts of partners across the city, including health and social service providers, community workers, and residents teaching safe sleep and engaging communities with SLEEP SAFE messaging. In addition, B'more for Healthy Babies has helped low-income families access safe, free cribs and provided home visiting services to thousands of expecting mothers.

BCHD supports this resolution, and will be present at the hearing to answer any questions the Council may have on this matter.