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News Release

For Immediate Release

Department of Health Launches Baby's Safe Sleep Awareness Campaign

Cambridge Bay, Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Nunavut (March 20, 2023) – To coincide with Canada's Safe Sleep awareness week, March 13-17, 2023, the Department of Health has launched a Baby's Safe Sleep Awareness Campaign to promote safe sleep practices and reduce the risk of infant sleep-related deaths throughout Nunavut.

A safe sleeping environment is vital to an infant's health and safety. Despite medical advances, sleep-related death – including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) – remains the second leading cause of death of healthy infants, with a higher rate among vulnerable populations. Within Nunavut, SIDS occurs at a rate of two to four times greater than in the rest of Canada.

This awareness campaign is the product of a year-long effort to enhance awareness and education of safe sleep environments to help parents and caregivers make informed decisions on safe sleep practices.

"Guided by traditional knowledge and Inuit Societal Values, the awareness campaign includes resources such as a Baby's Safe Sleep video, a slideshow highlighting safe sleep practices and bedsharing, posters and handouts promoting a safe sleep environment, social media posts, community radio scripts, newspaper ads and Newborn Wellness Kits for new parents," said Minister of Health John Main. "Our goal is healthier families and ensuring all children in Nunavut a healthy start to life. Together we can spread the word on the importance of creating safe sleep environments for all Nunavummiut infants."

As part of this awareness campaign, the Department of Health is collaborating with health care providers throughout Nunavut to increase training and knowledge around safe sleep practices. Staff across the territory will receive valuable professional development over the course of the next year on infant safe sleep practices and if bedsharing occurs, how to do it safely. Health is developing an online training tool and

an accompanying tool kit equipped with resources to help health care staff support parents and caregivers of young infants.

The Baby's Safe Sleep initiative aligns with the Department of Health's 2023-2026 Business Plan priorities tied to Government of Nunavut's strategic priority of enabling health and healing outlined in Katujjiluta: Sixth Assembly Mandate 2022.

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