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For Immediate Release

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Depts. of Children and Family Services, Public Health Release Safe Sleep PSA

Chicago, IL – The Illinois Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Public Health (IDPH) today released a public service announcement (PSA) aimed at educating the public about the dangers of co-sleeping with infants. The PSA can be [viewed online here](#).

“From 2009 to 2014, our department investigated 148 sleep-related infant deaths, but we know that many more went unreported,” said George H. Sheldon, Director of the Department of Children and Family Services. “In a majority of these cases, the child was less than a year old, with the average age being only 72 days old. Our shared message is that a majority of these deaths are preventable, and that caregivers must know and practice safe sleep: a baby should sleep alone, on his or her back, in a safe crib – with no exceptions.”

“Providing a safe sleeping environment is critical to reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sudden unexpected infant deaths, including accidental suffocation,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “The latest statistics show SIDS is the fifth leading cause of infant death in Illinois with 37 infant deaths in 2013. In addition, there were 49 infant deaths due to accidental suffocation, as well as 55 other sleep-related infant deaths. I encourage not only parents, but anyone who takes care of infants, including grandparents, family members, friends, and babysitters, to learn about the importance of back sleeping and the dangers of sharing a bed. These simple steps can help save the lives of infants everywhere.”

The PSA features a mother preparing her baby for bed, and cuts away just as the mother begins to fall asleep next to the baby. It closes with the national statistic of, “Suffocation due to co-sleeping contributes to nearly 4,000 sudden infant deaths every year,” and reminds parents that it can happen to anyone.

The PSA is available in both English and Spanish and can be sent in the format of a station’s choice. To request a copy of the announcement for broadcast, please contact the DCFS Office of Communications at 312-814-6847.