



For Immediate Release  
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## SAFE SLEEP SUMMIT

*Community generates creative ideas to prevent further infant deaths from unsafe sleep*

The City of Milwaukee Health Department hosted a Safe Sleep Summit with key community partners to build consensus on the best strategies to promote safe sleep in Milwaukee.

More than 200 participants attended the event, which was held from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Wheaton Franciscan – St. Joseph. The summit was also available via webcast and is archived at <http://safesleep.distancelearningcenter.com/>.

Dr. Fern Hauck, an Associate Professor of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences at the University of Virginia, was the keynote speaker. Joan Prince, Vice Chancellor for Partnerships and Innovation at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, served as the Master of Ceremonies.

“Nobody can disagree: the death of an infant for any culture, in any community, is the most tragic event one can think of,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “This is our chance to come together to prevent these tragedies.”

“It’s clear that we as a community need to take steps to address unsafe sleep practice in our community,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “This is everyone’s issue, and working collaboratively is the only way to protect our little ones and keep our city healthy.”

In late December, the Health Department reported that 120 infants died in the city before their first birthday in 2008. Of those, 16 died after sleeping in an unsafe sleep environment. Although this was a 50% drop from 2007, the overall rate of 23 sleep-related deaths per year has not changed significantly over the past decade.

The goal of the summit, which was sponsored Managed Health Services and Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, was to encourage community action. A brainstorming session generated at least 120 innovative ideas to address unsafe sleep in Milwaukee. All ideas and discussions from the summit will be compiled into a report and shared with the community.



From left to right: Master of Ceremonies Dr. Joan Prince, Executive Director of the Black Health Coalition Pat McManus, Milwaukee County Medical Examiner Brian Peterson, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the Medical College of Wisconsin Emmanuel Ngui, Columbia St. Mary’s Nurse Julia Means, and Keynote Speaker Dr. Fern Hauck.