



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Mayor Barrett to Host Faith Leaders for Strong Baby Educational Luncheon

Partnership with Columbia St. Mary's and faith community to focus on preventable causes of infant death

MILWAUKEE – On Tuesday, Oct. 7, Mayor Tom Barrett will host local faith leaders and health experts at an educational luncheon to discuss the leading causes of infant death in Milwaukee: Premature births and unsafe sleeping environments. The luncheon, held with support of the Columbia St. Mary's Foundation, takes place prior to the Strong Baby Sabbath, the fourth annual collaboration with Columbia St. Mary's and the faith community that will take place on Sunday, Oct. 12, 2014.

The effort supports Mayor Barrett's goal of reducing Milwaukee's overall infant mortality rate by 10 percent and the African-American infant mortality rate by 15 percent by 2017. It also supports the goal to reduce racial disparities in birth outcomes, set by the Milwaukee Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families, which is co-chaired by Mayor Barrett and led by United Way of Greater Milwaukee and funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program.

Preliminary data indicates that 117 infants died before their first birthdays in 2013, with nearly 60 percent of all infant deaths and 66 percent of African-American infant deaths a result of complications of prematurity. Additionally, half of sleep-related infant deaths in Milwaukee occur to infants who were born prematurely, making prematurity a significant risk factor for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and accidental suffocation.

The annual event is planned cooperatively by Columbia St. Mary's Urban Church Wellness Program, City of Milwaukee Health Department, March of Dimes - Wisconsin Chapter, and United Way of Greater Milwaukee's Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families. The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) Northwest Jurisdiction and General Baptist State Convention of Wisconsin Inc. also support the day.

- WHAT:** Strong Baby Sabbath Luncheon
- WHERE:** Columbia St. Mary's Water Tower Medical Commons
2350 North Lake Dr., Milwaukee
- TIME:** 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
- SPEAKERS:** Mayor Tom Barrett
Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker
Travis Andersen, President & CEO, Columbia St. Mary's

Additional interviews available at event.

Churches are encouraged to register at www.urbanchurchwellness.com or by calling the City of Milwaukee Health Department at (414) 286-8620.

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