



Tom Barrett  
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE  
Commissioner of Health

Joe'Mar Hooper, MPA  
Health Operations Administrator

**Health Department**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**Mayor Barrett to Mark Strong Baby Sabbath**

*City officials, Columbia St. Mary's Hospital, and area faith leaders partner to reduce infant deaths*

MILWAUKEE – On Sunday, Oct. 12, Mayor Tom Barrett and Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker will mark Milwaukee's Strong Baby Sabbath, the fourth annual collaboration with Columbia St. Mary's and the faith community, by visiting area congregations to raise awareness of the top two preventable causes of infant death in the city: Prematurity and unsafe sleeping environments.

"In Milwaukee, too many infants die because they are born too small, too soon, and because of unsafe sleeping environments," said Mayor Tom Barrett. "Working with area congregations, we can reach right into the heart of the community to share a collective message to help more Milwaukee babies celebrate their first birthdays. We are grateful to all congregations that have pledged to join this effort."

The Strong Baby Sabbath 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, and United Way of Greater Milwaukee's Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families. The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) Northwest Jurisdiction, General Baptist State Convention of Wisconsin Inc., and Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH) also support the day.

Churches can pledge to join the day at [www.urbanchurchwellness.com](http://www.urbanchurchwellness.com) or by calling the City of Milwaukee Health Department at (414) 286-8620.

Please see a schedule of appearances attached.

(Continued)

*Think Health. Act Now!*



## 2014 Strong Baby Sabbath Schedule of Appearances

9 a.m. Faith Builders  
4901 S. Howell Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI

11 a.m. Faithful Mission Pentecostal Church of Holiness  
935 W. Keefe Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI

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