



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Sandra J. Rotar
Health Operations Administrator

www.milwaukee.gov/health

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653 phone (414) 286-3521 fax (414) 286-5990

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 7, 2016

Contact: Sarah DeRoo
Office (414) 286-3548
Cell (414) 708-4060

MEDIA ADVISORY

Mayor Barrett and Health Commissioner to Mark 6th Annual Strong Baby Sabbath

City officials partner with area faith leaders to support families and reduce infant deaths

MILWAUKEE – On Sunday, Oct. 9, Mayor Tom Barrett and Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker will mark Milwaukee’s 6th annual Strong Baby Sabbath by visiting area churches to share a message of support for families. A collaboration with Ascension-Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital and the faith community, the Strong Baby Sabbath asks churches to partner in a day of raising awareness of the top two preventable causes of infant death in Milwaukee: Premature births and unsafe sleeping environments.

“In Milwaukee, too many infants die because they are born too small, too soon,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “Faith leaders are essential in providing support to their neighborhoods that can help reduce risk factors and connect people to resources. We invite every place of worship to join us in sharing a collective message that will help more Milwaukee babies be born strong babies and live to celebrate their first birthdays.”

On average, 100 Milwaukee infants die before their first birthdays, 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 the approximately 15 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 effort supports the goal of reducing Milwaukee’s overall infant mortality rate by 10 percent and the African-American infant mortality rate by 15 percent by 2017 set by Mayor Barrett and supported by the Milwaukee Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families at United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County.

The Strong Baby Sabbath is planned cooperatively by Ascension-Columbia St. Mary’s Urban Church Wellness Program, City of Milwaukee Health Department, March of Dimes Wisconsin Chapter, and the Milwaukee Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families at United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County.

Schedule of church appearances:

**9 a.m. Hephatha Lutheran Church
1720 W. Locust St., Milwaukee WI 53206**

**10 a.m. Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church
1025 E. Oklahoma Ave., Milwaukee WI 53207**

###

Think Health. Act Now!

