



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Sandra J. Rotar
Health Operations Administrator



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Mayor Barrett and Health Commissioner to Mark 7th Annual Strong Baby Sabbath
City officials partner with area faith leaders to support families and reduce infant deaths

MILWAUKEE – On Sunday, October 8, Mayor Tom Barrett and Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker will mark Milwaukee’s 7th 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 deaths in Milwaukee: Premature births and unsafe sleeping environments.

“In Milwaukee, too many infants die because they are born too small, too soon, or placed in unsafe sleeping environments,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “Faith leaders are essential in providing support to their neighborhoods that can help reduce the risk factors related to infant deaths and connect people to resources. I 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 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 Strong Baby Sabbath is one day of a year-round effort that supports the goal of reducing Milwaukee’s overall infant mortality rate by 10 percent and the African-American infant mortality rate by 15 percent, a goal 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, UW-Milwaukee Maternal & Child Health Pipeline Training Program, and the Milwaukee Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families at United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County.

Church appearances:

- 10 a.m. Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church
3456 N. 38th St., Milwaukee, WI 53216**
- 11 a.m. Lamb of God Missionary Baptist Church
8415 W. Bradley Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53224**

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