



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Sandra J. Rotar
Health Operations Administrator



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Mayor Barrett and Partners to Celebrate Strong Baby Sanctuary Locations, Issue Call for New Partners
Collaboration with Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s, faith community, and local partners to host informational luncheon

MILWAUKEE – On Tuesday, June 27, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Mayor Tom Barrett and Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker will join Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s and partners in celebrating the city’s 23 Strong Baby Sanctuary churches, and call on faith leaders to join the year-round partnership focused on reducing preventable infant deaths.

Called the Strong Baby Sanctuary Initiative, the effort seeks to welcome additional faith communities to an effort launched in 2015 that builds upon the collaborative work of Mayor Barrett’s annual Strong Baby Sabbath, held each October, and the citywide Strong Baby Campaign.

In 2015, 10 churches became official Strong Baby Sanctuaries, serving as locations where pregnant women and new families can find referrals to an existing network of community resources or take part in church or communitywide programs that can lower stress, support wellness, and reduce Milwaukee’s top two preventable causes of infant deaths: Complications of prematurity and sleep-related deaths. Today, the partnership has resulted in 23 churches becoming official Strong Baby Sanctuary locations.

Data indicates that of the approximately 100 infants who die before their first birthdays, nearly 60 percent are the result of complications of prematurity. Additionally, approximately 15 percent die as a result of sleep-related deaths. Half of the sleep-related deaths occur to infants who were born prematurely, making prematurity a significant risk factor for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and accidental suffocation.

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

- WHAT:** Strong Baby Sanctuary Informational Luncheon
- WHEN:** Tuesday, June 27
- TIME:** 11: 30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- LOCATION:** Columbia St. Mary’s Garden Café
2301 N. Lake Dr., Milwaukee
- SPEAKERS:** Mayor Tom Barrett
Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker
Bill Solberg, Columbia St. Mary’s
*Additional interviews with faith leaders and partners available on site

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