

Safe Sleep Baby Boxes Debut on Prince of Wales: September 19, 2015

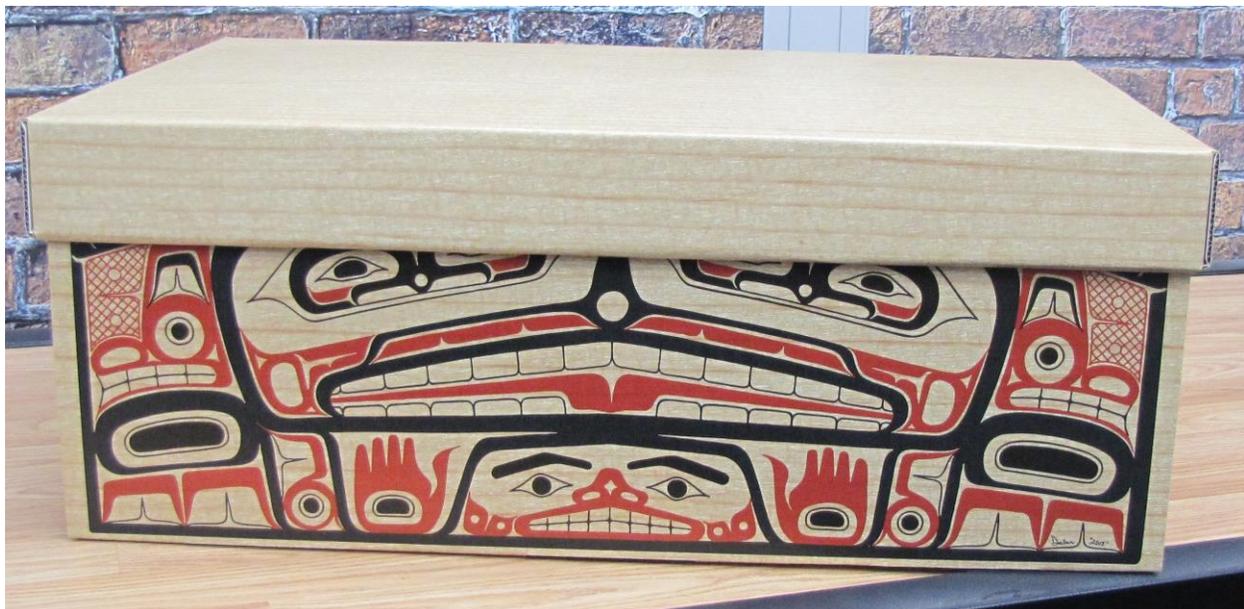


Preventing the tragic loss of an infant from Sudden Unidentified Infant Death is the goal of a new program offered on the island through the Craig Public Health Center and PeaceHealth. For the past 20 years, the "Safe Sleep" national public education campaign has been in action to decrease the number of infant deaths in the United States.

From 2012 to 2014, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services reported that 66 infant deaths occurred in a sleep environment. On average, two infants die per month from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in Alaska. Most SIDS deaths occur between 1 and 6 months of age. However, SIDS deaths can occur anytime during a baby's first year. SIDS is a sudden and silent medical disorder that can happen to an infant who seems

healthy. SIDS is sometimes called "crib death" or "cot death" because it is associated with the timeframe when the baby is sleeping. Cribs themselves do not cause SIDS, but the baby's sleep environment can influence sleep-related causes of death.

Over 75 years ago, Finland developed the "Baby Box" which is given to each mother. The cardboard box is filled with items for the newborn, including bedding and a small mattress. With the mattress in the bottom, the box becomes a baby's first bed. Many children, from all backgrounds, have their first naps within the safety of the box's four cardboard walls. The box, along with education provided to families, has drastically reduced infant mortality in Finland which now has one of the lowest SIDS rates in the world. Preventing SIDS in Alaska is our goal as well.



As a measure to reduce the rate of SIDS, the Craig Public Health Center and other Southeast Alaska Public Health nurses will be collaborating with PeaceHealth Medical Group in Craig and Ketchikan to participate in a sleep safety pilot program, "Little Alaskan Dream Boxes". On September 19, Craig Public Health nurses and Gail Jones from PeaceHealth Medical Group Women's Health Clinic in Ketchikan, will host "Baby Showers" to debut the Safe Sleep Baby Box program on the island. The Baby Shower and SIDS Prevention Training sessions will be held at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. during the Craig Children's Health Fair on September 19, which runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Craig High School.

Every expectant family as well as those who recently welcomed a new baby are invited to attend the Baby Shower and safe sleep education training. The training will raise awareness of safe sleep practices for families as well as other sleep safety risks, thereby reducing the risk of SIDS. Upon completion of the training, including pre- and post-test surveys, families will receive a "Little Alaskan Dream Box" filled with baby and mommy gifts, valued at over \$150. Patterned after the Finland Baby Boxes, each box include a mattress, mattress pad and fitted sheet as well as a baby sleep sack so babies can safely and comfortably sleep in the boxes.

Little Alaskan Dream Boxes and infant safe-sleep training will be made available on an ongoing basis to all island families through the Craig Public Health Center. After a new baby arrives, Public Health regularly reaches out to families to offer a visit with a nurse. As nurses visit with families they discuss newborn care, breast feeding, making the most of this precious time with infants, and answer any questions. Expectant parents are also encouraged to call and set up an advance visit to get a Safe Sleep Baby Box.

