

Infant Mortality Donation Account

The Milwaukee Health Department has begun an infant mortality public awareness and prevention campaign in collaboration with area hospitals, healthcare and social service providers, and consumers. This donation account will allow for private and foundation contributions to the campaign. This money will allow for expansion of the number of campaign messages, an increased number of placement sites and additional media tools such as interior bus cards, transit shelters, large billboards, posters and bumper stickers. Full page advertisements in several community newspapers are also planned. Radio advertisements may also be used. This campaign features Milwaukee babies and Milwaukee families. The campaign is meant to target all races and ethnicities. The campaign offers simple but powerful public health messages, such as 'Dangerous Position' (Back to Sleep) and 'I Need My Space' (no blankets, pillows or stuffed animals).

This campaign focuses on three (3) causes of infant death. These are Prematurity through messages related to early and quality prenatal care, the dangers of cigarette smoking, the signs and symptoms of preterm labor and alcohol and drug abuse; SIDS messages related to Back to Sleep, excessive bedding, bed-sharing and the dangers of sleeping on a couch with an infant; and infant death related to Infections such as pneumonia and meningitis through messages about early and regular infant doctor visits.

It is a significant measure of a community's commitment to its children and their families. Tragically many infants do not survive, even to their 1st birthday. 133 babies died in Milwaukee in 2002. They died because they were born too soon. They died when they were sharing a bed with an adult or other children. They died when they were placed on their stomachs to sleep. They died suddenly of an infection which no one in the family believed was serious. They died because their parents do not realize that smoking and drinking is dangerous to an infant's development and ability to breathe. The number of children dying and the causes of infant death are many yet Milwaukee's parents, grandparents, legislators, community members do not understand the magnitude of the problem nor are they aware that some infant deaths can be prevented.