



Kansas Infant Death and SIDS Network

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To: Judiciary Committee

From: Christy Schunn, LSCSW, Executive Director, Kansas Infant Death and SIDS Network, Inc.

Chairman King and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to express support of SB 77.

High rate of infant mortality

According to the Kansas State Child Death Review Board, SCDRB, 2011 report, thirty-four infants died in 2009 from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS. Of these infants, 68% were in unsafe sleep environments and 71% were in an unsafe sleep position. Aside from SIDS, twelve infants died in 2009 due to suffocation. The Review Board states these infant deaths from suffocation were often the results of improper sleeping arrangements. While we benefit from the current information provided by the Review Board, more in-depth information will allow for improved safe sleep prevention efforts. Thus, the KIDS Network supports SB 77 which includes an amendment that will allow the Review Board to disclose de-identified information and records for research and public health purposes when approved by the state review board, in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the board.

Need for research

While the issues surrounding infant mortality are multi-factorial there is pertinent information that can shed light on why Kansas babies die at a higher rate than the national average. We are at a disadvantage for better understanding the causes of infant mortality in our State, and coming up with Kansas-specific solutions to make sure our babies are born healthy and stay healthy. Access to the necessary information through SCDRB is pertinent to understanding and reducing our staggeringly high rate of infant death.

Community solution

SB 77 is an important step toward understanding the factors related to infant mortality. SB 77 will provide the opportunity to analyze the data while maintaining client privacy. Improved research activities enable communities to identify causes of infant mortality and to design and implement interventions to improve service systems and resources to families.

I respectfully ask for your support of SB 77.

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