

DOSE: Direct On Scene Education Program

Location: Florida

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Category: **Cutting Edge Practice**

TITLE V/MCH BLOCK GRANT MEASURES ADDRESSED
#05. Percent of infants placed to sleep on their backs

BACKGROUND

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), each year approximately 3,500 babies in the United States die suddenly and unexpectedly each year. Sudden unexpected infant deaths include sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), accidental suffocation in a sleeping environment, and other deaths from unknown causes.¹

The catalyst for the program was the number of sleep related infant deaths occurring in Broward County, Florida. The average number of preventable sleep related deaths in our two highest risk zip codes at the inception of the program was 7-9 per year (15-21 in our county as a whole). We developed the program to be able to proactively address this issue. After our first year we had reduced that number of deaths to 3 in those two high risk zip codes.

DOSE: Direct On Scene Education™ is an innovative program developed in 2011, by Captain James Carroll and Jennifer Combs, MSN, ARNP, in response to the number of sleep related infant deaths occurring in Broward County, Florida. As these deaths are 100% preventable, the two authors looked for a way to utilize first responders in the fight to reduce infant mortality. DOSE utilizes first responders to disseminate the Safe to Sleep message to the communities that they serve. Fire fighters, EMTs and paramedics were the initial targeted group to pilot DOSE in and now DOSE has expanded to include police, child protective investigator officers and housing authority workers to name a few.

First responders are able to connect the identified family in need to local maternal-child health agencies in the community. These maternal-child health agencies are then able to assist these families in need who otherwise would have remained anonymous and lost within the community.

¹ Source: Centers for Disease Control website, 2017. www.cdc.gov/SUID

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

DOSE: Direct On Scene Education™ aims to educate first responders and other social agency workers who have access to families' homes, about Safe to Sleep for all infants. Through their education, these first responders and social agency workers will be able to educate families about Safe to Sleep, including the identification of unsafe sleep environments and referral of families that require assistance in obtaining a safe crib to local maternal child health agencies.

TARGET POPULATION SERVED

The targeted population are individuals and families who have an infant up to one year of age in their care.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Since our program inception, DOSE has gone from being in one county in Florida, to being in 12 states nationwide. We have trained nearly 5,000 first responders. In our two highest risk zip codes in Broward County, we have reduced the number of sleep related infant deaths from 7-9 per year to an average of 1-3 per year. In Broward County last year, we handed out ~500 safe to sleep educational kits (brochures) to families and distributed 15 cribs (we find that the majority of homes have cribs, they actually just do not use them).

PROGRAM OUTCOMES/EVALUATION DATA

Data is collected from participating stations/organizations locally on a monthly basis. On a national level, data is collected twice a year. Information collected includes number of individuals trained, number of educational information kits distributed to families and number of cribs distributed to families.

PROGRAM COST

The DOSE program is staffed by two part time employees (Captain James Carroll and Jennifer Combs, MSN, ARNP) and is a collaborative program of Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Broward. The cost of becoming a DOSE provider includes the cost of training hours and the purchase of a classroom set of training materials. Educational materials, to distribute to families, can be obtained free from the federal government. Cribs can be obtained through local maternal child health agencies or through hosting a crib drive. An example of a one-day training with one set of training materials would be \$850 plus travel costs for the trainer.

ASSETS & CHALLENGES

Assets: DOSE has completed trainings in 12 states nationwide, training over 5,000 first responders.

Challenges: The hardest part to date has been having first responders report their data in a consistent manner.

Overcoming Challenges: DOSE staff reaches out to participating programs, locally on a monthly basis to gather data. On a national level, Captain Carroll distributes a quarterly newsletter, conducts phone call follow ups and data is collected twice a year.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned including having initial meetings directly with fire and police administration management to get their full support. Without the complete support of management at the highest level, DOSE will not be successful. We have found gentle, reassuring pressure from safe sleep champions within each organization help drive the program to success.

FUTURE STEPS

Future steps include the continued growth of the DOSE program. The initial focus for the DOSE program was infant safe sleep, but we now modify content to meet the needs of the requesting community. For example, a community may have high rates of children drowning. These communities can utilize DOSE to disseminate information about water safety/drowning prevention. DOSE has evolved into a community education tool. It is used to open dialogues with families that welcome these first responders and other social agency workers into their homes.

COLLABORATIONS

DOSE is a collaborative program of Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Broward, Inc.

PEER REVIEW & REPLICATION

N/A

RESOURCES PROVIDED

<https://www.doseprogram.com>
<https://www.hmhbroward.org>

Key words: SUID, Safe to Sleep, infant sleep, injury prevention

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