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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

To: Local Media and Press Release Subscribers
From: Katrina Harwood, Health Officer
Date: August 31, 2023

Rock County Public Health Offers Infant Safe Sleep Training to First Responders

Janesville, WI – On Wednesday, September 6, the Rock County Public Health Department (RCPHD) is partnering with [DOSE: Direct On Scene Education](#) to provide Rock County first responders with an innovative training to eliminate sleep-related infant deaths. DOSE training is made possible through Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) grant funding received by RCPHD.

Since 2018, there have been over ten (10) infant deaths due to unsafe sleep hazards in Rock County*. Unsafe sleep is a leading factor in sudden unexplained infant death in Wisconsin, especially among infants less than 5 months of age.**

According to the [Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin](#):

- From 2019-2021 in Wisconsin, there were 167 sudden unexpected infant deaths that occurred in the sleep environment.
- Approximately 98% of these had some sort of unsafe sleep factor present in their environment.
- An average of four (4) safe sleep recommendations were not being met at the time of the death.

Unsafe sleep factors and childhood deaths due to unsafe sleep factors are preventable with education and community support.

During the training, first responders will learn to identify and remove hazards from an infant's sleep space, and provide education to parents, while on scene during emergency and non-emergency 911 calls. First responders will also learn about community resources for families in need of extra service.

All Rock County Fire and EMS professionals were invited to attend the one-day training which is being held at Janesville Fire Department Station #1. Rock County police departments, as well as home visiting services such as Child Protective Services, Birth-to-3, and other child-focused organizations were also invited.

DOSE is being taught by Captain James Carroll (FLFR), who, along with Jennifer Combs (MSN, ARNP), created the program. DOSE is presented in a “train the trainer” format to allow sustainability within departments.

The program was piloted in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. According to the DOSE program’s lead, “We went from averaging 7-9 deaths per year to three in our first full year of running the program. The following year, the number was down to one with us now averaging 1-3 deaths per year in those high-risk zip codes. So, while we don't take direct credit for the decrease, we know that education empowers individuals which leads to better outcomes.”

DOSE is currently being used in 13 states. RCPHD is proud to facilitate this training in Rock County which will be the first county in Wisconsin to hold the training.

If members from the media are interested in an on-site interview between training sessions, please contact [Abbigail Brown](#), Public Health Nurse.

Sources: *Wisconsin Vital Records **[Wisconsin DHS](#)

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Rock County Public Health Department serves Rock County residents by improving population health outcomes and removing barriers through community partnerships to provide everyone the opportunity to reach their full health potential. Visit the Rock County Public Health Department [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Please send all media inquiries to:

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