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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Unique demonstration to raise awareness about infant Mortality** **U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow to attend**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – A one mile stroll with baby buggies around Garfield Park is being planned for this Saturday, September 12, 2015, but this is not your average walk in the park! The people planning to push the strollers are not out to get some exercise. They are demonstrating to put an end to infant mortality.

In Kent County six babies have died already in 2015 due to unsafe sleep practices. In an average year unsafe sleep practices kill 150 in Michigan. Almost every one of those deaths is preventable.

“Despite years of efforts to help parents and caregivers understand the importance of safe sleep practices, we are concerned that these numbers are not falling fast enough,” says Barbara Hawkins Palmer with the Kent County Health Department. “Sadly, the state is on course to have possibly its worst year ever. It is obvious the story needs to continually be told.”

Partners in tomorrow’s event - The Micah Center, Strong Beginnings, Healthy Kent, The Garfield Park Neighborhood Association and the Kent County Health Department - will continue to tell the story. Their message is simple; every baby deserves a chance at life, every parent and caregiver needs to know about safe sleep practices.

September has been designated [“Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month”](#) in Michigan by Gov. Rick Snyder. Kent County Commission Chairman, Dan Koorndyk, has also proclaimed September to be Infant Mortality Awareness Month in Kent County. More resources including tips for parents can be found [here](#).

Late this afternoon, United States Senator Debbie Stabenow confirmed, through her office, that she will be in attendance. Several local leaders, including Kent County Commissioner Candace Chivis, are scheduled to attend. The event will be held 11-1 in Garfield Park at 2111 Madison NE, Grand Rapids. Senator Stabenow is scheduled to arrive at 11:45.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).

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