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Director & State Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2012

TO: COUNTY CORONERS, SHERIFF CORONERS AND MEDICAL EXAMINERS
SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME (SIDS) COORDINATORS
MATERNAL, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH (MCAH) DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED INFANT DEATH TIMELY REFERRALS AND PROVIDING
GRIEF/BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE TO PARENTS/CAREGIVERS WHO
EXPERIENCE A SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED INFANT DEATH

This letter is in reference to the current MCAH Scope of Work (SOW). Within the SOW, each Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) MCAH program is required to contact all parents/caregivers who experience a presumed SIDS death to provide grief and bereavement support services. California HSC §123740, requires local health officers to contact persons having custody and control of the infant to provide information and support services. It is very critical that the LHJ receives the timely referral from the coroner/medical examiner's office in order for SIDS Coordinators/Public Health Professionals to provide grief/bereavement support services to all parents/caregivers who experience a presumed SIDS death.

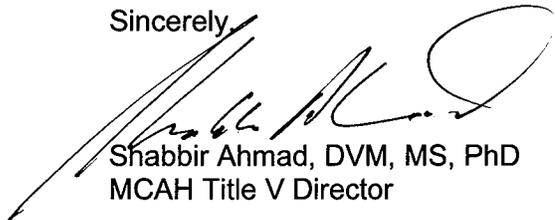
With the introduction of the International Classifications of Disease, 10th Revision (ICD-10) in 1999, causes of death listed on the death certificate that will be classified to SIDS (R95) in California include Crib Death, SDII (sudden death in infancy), SIDS, SUD (sudden unexplained death), SUID (sudden unexplained infant death), SUDI (sudden unexplained death, infant) and SID (sudden infant death). It is very important for the coroner/medical examiner's office to voluntarily refer all sudden and unexpected infant deaths to the local MCAH program, including deaths with an "undetermined" diagnosis. The California SIDS Advisory Council recommends that any person interacting with families who may receive one of these diagnoses be provided the same grief/bereavement support and SIDS education as a family who receives a SIDS diagnosis.

We are very grateful for the continued support of coroners/medical examiners referrals of sudden, unexpected infant deaths even with the continued suspension of the state mandates due to state budget constraints. We also appreciate local MCAH SIDS Coordinators/Public Health Professionals for providing grief/bereavement support services to all parents/caregivers who experience a presumed SIDS death that are referred to their offices. The collaboration between the coroner/medical examiner office and local MCAH Program is essential when an infant dies suddenly and unexpectedly. It is difficult for the parents of the infant to deal with such a tragic loss and the availability of support services to help them work through their loss could be critical and beneficial.

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We look forward to continuing to work with all of you together. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Guey-Shiang Tsay, Nurse Consultant for the SIDS Program, at Guey-Shiang.Tsay@CDPH.ca.gov, or Carrie Florez, Research Scientist for Epidemiology Evaluation and Data Operations, at Carrie.Florez@cdph.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Shabbir Ahmad, DVM, MS, PhD
MCAH Title V Director