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



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

DATE: JULY 31, 2015

TO: COUNTY CORONERS, SHERIFF CORONERS AND MEDICAL EXAMINERS

SUBJECT: EXPANSION OF REFERRALS TO INCLUDE ANY SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED INFANT DEATH FOR GRIEF SUPPORT SERVICES/NEW CORONER NOTIFICATION CARDS

When an infant dies suddenly and unexpectedly, the need for the family to receive grief support is crucial. Currently, California Health and Safety Code §123740 requires local health jurisdictions (LHJ) contact persons having custody and control of the infant who experienced a presumed Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) death and provide grief support services. LHJs rely on referral of any sudden, unexpected infant death from their local coroner or medical examiner's office to be able to contact families and provide support services.

The intent of this letter is to ask coroners and medical examiners to voluntarily refer to their LHJ the death of any infant who dies suddenly and unexpectedly, regardless of the sleep environment at the time of death. This would include voluntary referral of deaths that may receive an 'unknown' or 'undetermined' diagnosis, as well as, deaths where risk factors in the sleep environment may lead to a diagnosis of 'asphyxia', 'positional or mechanical asphyxia', or 'probable overlay'. The California SIDS Advisory Council recommends any person interacting with families who may receive one of these diagnoses be provided the same grief support as a family who receives a SIDS diagnosis.

Collaboration between the coroner or medical examiner office and their LHJ 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 grief is critical and beneficial. We thank you for your continued referrals of sudden, unexpected infant deaths, even with the continued suspension of the state mandates due to state budget constraints.

Enclosed are new, blue, Coroner Notification Cards (CNC) for you to use. Please do not use the yellow CNCs as the account set up to receive those cards has closed. We

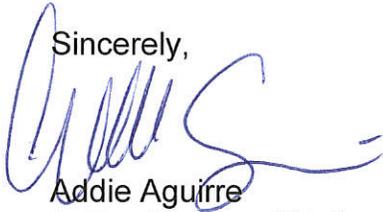
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appreciate your continued support sending completed CNCs, which now will be sent to the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division at the California Department of Public Health.

We look forward to continuing to work with you. 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. For questions specific to the CNC, please contact Carrie Florez, Research Scientist, at Carrie.Florez@cdph.ca.gov or (916) 650-0323.

Sincerely,



Addie Aguirre
Acting Division Chief

Enclosures

cc: MCAH Directors, SIDS Coordinators