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Maryland's Ban on Sale of Crib Bumper Pads Takes Effect Tomorrow

Babies Sleep Best "Alone, on their Back in, and in a Crib"

BALTIMORE (June 20, 2013) – Tomorrow, June 21, 2013, Maryland's statewide ban on the sale of crib bumper pads will take effect.

The new policy was adopted by regulation of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) in November 2012 following 18 months of expert and public consultation. Because crib bumper pads offer no meaningful benefit and pose potentially serious risks to infants, including suffocation and death, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health all advise against their use.

"Pediatricians in Maryland support the new ban on the sale of crib bumpers. Far too often in our state, healthy infants are dying in unsafe sleep positions," said Dr. Scott Krugman, Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center and President of the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. "Bumpers offer no benefit to infants and may cause unnecessary deaths."

"The ban on the sale of crib bumpers promotes safer sleep for infants, and safer sleep will mean fewer tragedies for Maryland families," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of DHMH.

The ban on the sale of crib bumper pads is part of an ongoing public health effort to educate parents about safe sleep practices for babies. The Department is distributing over 200,000 cards and posters on safe sleep to WIC agencies and local health departments. Free materials are also available to providers and can be ordered at www.dhmh.maryland.gov/safesleep. The key message of this effort is that babies sleep best alone, on their back and in a crib free of blankets, pillows, fluffy toys, crib bumpers, or stuffed animals.

Today, the Department is releasing data showing that growing numbers of Maryland mothers are placing their infants to sleep primarily on their backs (74 percent) and never or rarely co-slept with their infants (60 percent), a notable increase that coincides with public health outreach on safe sleep.

The ban applies to crib bumpers that are made of non-mesh type material, rest directly above the mattress along the length of each of the interior sides of the crib, and are intended to be used until the age that an infant pulls to stand. The Department will issue a warning to an individual who ships or sells crib bumper pads to a purchaser in Maryland. If there continues to be violation of the regulation after a warning is issued, a fine of up to \$500 for each crib bumper shipped or sold can be assessed.

The proposed ban does not apply to vertical bumpers that wrap tightly around each individual crib rail or mesh crib liners. However, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene does not endorse any product for use as bumpers in infant cribs.

Additional information about safe sleep and the crib bumper ban, as well as the fact sheet containing the new safe sleep data, can be found at: www.dhmh.maryland.gov/safesleep.

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