Child Death Review Team Issues Report

The Child Death Review Team has issued a report of child deaths in Santa Barbara County for July 2009 through June 2012. The report reflects the deaths of children under 18 years of age and recommendations to prevent future deaths.

The Child Death Review Team is a county-wide interagency team established in concert with Penal Code Section 1174.32. Child Death Review Teams identify and review suspicious child deaths and facilitate communication among persons involved in child abuse and neglect cases. Teams also provide information about child deaths to the state for integration of information about how to prevent child deaths at the state level.

“The death of a child, of any age and any circumstance is a tragedy,” noted Dr. Takashi Wada, Director of the Department of Public Health and Health Officer. “It is incumbent upon all of us to identify what is preventable and take steps to prevent future deaths.”

In Santa Barbara County deaths to children under 18 years of age ranged between 31-44 deaths per fiscal year (July-June) from 2009-2012:

- The majority of child deaths were due to medical conditions or unpreventable disease.
- In fiscal year 2009 – 2010, 75.7% (28/37) of all deaths were due to medical conditions.
- In fiscal year 2010 – 2011, 68.2% (30/44) of all deaths were due to medical conditions.
- In fiscal year 2011 – 2012, 77.4% (24/31) of all deaths were due to medical conditions.
- Over the three years, 28 of the deaths due to medical conditions for children under the age of 1, were due in some part to prematurity.
- Accidents encompassed a variety of accidents such as motor vehicle accidents, drowning, and accidental drug overdose.

Parents co-sleeping with young children or maternal overlying are factors in some accidents and undetermined deaths. This finding has guided the Child Death Review Team in Santa Barbara County to focus on education in our community about the prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and risks associated with co-sleeping.

The Child Death Review Team will continue to review child deaths. The team remains committed to addressing barriers and learning from child deaths to prevent future deaths of children in our community.

For a copy of the full report, please see our website: www.sbcphd.org .

###