



## **The SBS PREVENTION CENTER at MCC**

### **History**

In the early 90s, Massachusetts Citizens for Children (MCC) directed Dorchester CARES, a five-year child abuse prevention and family support initiative funded by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN). One of the many components piloted and evaluated as part of this demonstration was a Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) prevention project. NCCAN had funded the Ohio Research Institute on Child Abuse Prevention to lead a three-year SBS prevention pilot and MCC agreed to serve as one of its sites.

During this period, MCC implemented a pilot education program with four Boston-area hospitals including: Beth Israel Hospital, Boston City Hospital, New England Medical Center, and St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Seven community health centers participated including: Bowdoin Street Health Center, Uphams Corner Health Center, Little House Health Center, Codman Square Health Center, Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center, Neponset Health Center, and Geiger-Gibson Community Health Center. The Hyde Park Healthy Baby Program, a home visitation program was also included.

Nurse Managers and health professionals in these sites received trainings on SBS prevention. Educational materials were distributed to new parents on their first postpartum appointment. Evaluations collected from parents and professionals became part of the national evaluation on SBS prevention.

Committed to taking this effort statewide, MCC launched on November 1, 1996, a public education campaign to reduce infant death and disability due to SBS - only months before the widely publicized death of 2-year-old Matthew Eappen. Radio spots in English and Spanish were distributed and parents who requested information received a variety of materials about infant crying and SBS.

Since then, as a leading spokesperson on SBS in the state, MCC has reach thousands of parents, caretakers, professionals and the public through brochures and printed materials, requests on MCC's 800-CHILDREN line, and information distributed by hospitals, clinics, birthing classes, schools, etc. To date nearly one million MCC prevention brochures have been distributed in Massachusetts and in other states that have adopted it as their core teaching tool.

MCC has worked extensively with television, radio and the print media to promote awareness of SBS and its prevention. It has provided assistance to communities, such as Brockton, Haverhill and Framingham that in the wake of local SBS cases were seeking to develop prevention responses. Spurred by local cases of SBS, several Massachusetts hospitals have also turned to MCC for assistance on how to address these preventable tragedies.

### **Current Efforts**

In Worcester County a number of factors converged in 2001 that helped forge a commitment to address the SBS crisis in Central Massachusetts. SBS-related injuries to three infants within a six-week period in the spring prompted the Regional Legal Counsel for the Department of Social Services and the Child Protection Project at UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center to contact MCC requesting information and assistance. Several meetings resulted in a consensus that a countywide SBS prevention initiative should be

established; the Central Massachusetts SBS Prevention Campaign was subsequently launched. The Campaign is a broad and diverse coalition made up of child and family policymakers, providers, and advocates from both the private and public sectors. MCC serves as Coordinator for the initiative.

MCC's comprehensive plan to reduce infant death and injuries from SBS was approved by the coalition. Since adoption of the plan, hundreds of professionals in the county from health care, law enforcement, social services and child protection have been trained. An in-hospital SBS prevention program for parents of newborns has been launched in each of six birthing hospitals in the county and thousands of parents have now been educated about SBS and about how to cope with infant crying – a frequent trigger of SBS. Injury surveillance efforts with the MA Department of Public Health have helped to identify gaps in data coding and collection and recommendations have been proposed to improve those. Evaluation has been a cornerstone of the effort so that effective programs and strategies could be shared and replicated across the state.

In September 2005, MCC helped establish the Hampden County SBS Prevention Initiative and is currently coordinating that county effort. Trainings have been conducted with nurses at each of the three birthing hospitals in the region and a day-long seminar on infant crying and soothing was held for 60 local professionals. MCC also coordinated a Grand Rounds for physicians and other health care providers on June 25, 2007 at Baystate Medical Center featuring national SBS expert and pediatrician Dr. Robert Reece. A panel discussion was also convened involving county leaders in health care, child protective services and law enforcement to discuss ways to improve coordination and information exchange in SBS cases.

MCC was instrumental in advocating for the development of the Statewide SBS Advisory Committee which is now staffed and co-chaired by the Department of Public Health and for the passage of the comprehensive Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention bill which was signed into law on November 16, 2006.

MCC's SBS prevention work has been supported by several foundations including: the Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation, the Jane Cook 1992 Trust, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, and the Davis Foundation. These funds have helped MCC to provide training and technical assistance to communities and to produce and disseminate prevention materials statewide.

Currently, the SBS Prevention Center at MCC provides:

- Project coordination of SBS prevention efforts in Worcester, Hampden and Middlesex Counties
- Training of nurses by nurse educators skilled in SBS training and using an MCC-developed training approved for Nursing Contact Hours by the Massachusetts Association of Registered Nurses.
- Nurses Training protocol for educating parents developed by MCC and reviewed by SBS experts working in hospital settings across the country
- In-hospital SBS parent education tools, including training protocol, evaluated videos, brochures, parent certificates (all in English and Spanish).
- SBS Training Kit, including comprehensive curriculum, television and video tools, articles, etc.
- Collection, entry and analysis of SBS project evaluation data
- Public relations and SBS prevention awareness events
- Production and distribution of new SBS prevention training tools
- Comprehensive SBS information and links on [www.masskids.org](http://www.masskids.org).

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