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**National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep Improvement and Innovation Network  
(NAPPSS-IIN): Making Safe Infant Sleep and Breastfeeding a National Norm**

**Executive Summary**

**BACKGROUND**

The National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ) is leading the **National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep Improvement and Innovation Network (NAPPSS-IIN): Making Safe Infant Sleep and Breastfeeding a National Norm** funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as part of the *National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep Program*. The project is a five-year cooperative agreement running July 2017 to July 2022.

NICHQ will build off the work of the existing NAPPSS Coalition by partnering with a cadre of national experts and organizations supporting safe infant sleep, breastfeeding and health equity to lead this national initiative of over 70 organizations that are committed to reducing infant mortality. Through this effort, NICHQ and participating organizations will secure partnerships with communities in 14 states to develop, pilot and implement a safe infant sleep and breastfeeding safety bundle within hospitals, child care and social services settings. As part of this effort, NICHQ will facilitate implementation support for the National Action Plan—the strategic action plan developed by the Coalition—by moving from campaigns to conversations in promoting safe infant sleep and breastfeeding and translating evidence-based practices into “safety bundles” to improve the processes of care and patient outcomes in safe sleep and breastfeeding. NAPPSS-IIN will emphasize both improvement and innovation. For additional information, please review the [Collaborative Charter](#).

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of NAPPSS-IIN is to make safe infant sleep and breastfeeding a national norm. Specifically, the project aims to increase infant caregiver adoption of safe infant sleep practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), as well as breastfeeding, by empowering champions for these protective behaviors within systems that serve families at risk. At the cornerstone of this project is the goal of changing individual behavior on a national scale through a multifaceted approach that promotes common messaging in collaboration with multiple organizations and stakeholders that intersect with infant caregivers. The infant caregiver is the individual who puts a baby down for sleep and could be a parent, grandparent, other family members, child care provider or other guardian. NAPPSS-IIN is designed to positively influence the proportion of infants who: (1) are placed to sleep on their backs in a safe sleep environment that follows the AAP recommendations, (2) are ever breastfed, and (3) continue to breastfeed at six months. Ultimately, this program seeks to reduce the rate of infants who tragically die due to sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUID).

**IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY:**

The **Project Oversight Committee** provides leadership and strategic direction to the overall implementation of the NAPPSS-IIN project. The Project Steering Committee is responsible for providing strategic direction to the key activities of the NAPPSS-IIN project outlined below.

- 1) Activate champions of safe infant sleep and breastfeeding behaviors within systems that intersect with infant caregivers and families at risk through the following mechanisms:**

The **NAPPSS-IIN Coalition** is comprised of over 70 partners at the national level whose organizations represent professional associations, family and center-based child care, home visiting, hospitals, breastfeeding advocacy, community health centers, birth centers, and businesses that provide goods and services to infant caregivers. Expansion of the Coalition under NAPPSS-IIN will include a focus on engaging manufacturers, members of the media and additional family and center-based child care providers.

The NAPPSS-IIN Coalition engages in key project activities led by NICHQ, including: technical assistance to states on integrating safe sleep and breastfeeding promotion efforts; training and provision of resources to systems and community groups to engage families in respectful dialogue that help identify and overcome barriers in integrating safe sleep and breastfeeding; and implementing a safe infant sleep and breastfeeding safety bundle—a structured way of improving the processes of care and patient outcomes—in hospitals and other child care and social services settings.

The **Wisdom Council**, a subgroup of the Coalition, representing diverse socioeconomic and cultural groups identified at higher risk for SUID, particularly African American and American Indian/Alaska Native populations, provides an equity lens in the development of culturally competent approaches and resources. To best reach vulnerable populations, this group will bridge the national activities with the state/community activities of NAPPSS-IIN by collaborating directly with both the Expert Advisory Committee and the Communities of Practice. Representatives from the Communities of Practice, including the hospital pilot sites, will be included on the Wisdom Council.

The **Communities of Practice** represent the states and communities that engage in a process of collective learning through the implementation of the safe infant sleep and breastfeeding safety bundle. Local affiliates from the breastfeeding and safe infant sleep coalitions, State Perinatal Quality Collaboratives, American Hospital Association, Children's Hospital Association, WIC, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Bright Horizons will serve on the Communities of Practice to create, test, implement and evaluate the safe infant sleep and breastfeeding bundle over the course of the NAPPSS-IIN project. Additionally, Ascension Health, the largest nonprofit health system in the U.S., will serve as a key partner on the NAPPSS-IIN Communities of Practice, and as such will promote bundle implementation in locations where Ascension hospitals exist within a selected state. The Communities of Practice will benefit from the resources promulgated by the Coalition and the Wisdom Council.

**2) Enable National Action Teams to drive measurable change in increasing the adoption of safe infant sleep behavior and breastfeeding on priority components of the National Action Plan to Increase Safe Infant Sleep.**

The National Action Plan contains three interactive goals: 1) Infant caregivers will understand the advantages of safe sleep and breastfeeding; develop positive perceptions of these practices; and adopt such practices; 2) Individuals and groups who are trusted by infant caregivers and who influence infant caregivers' child-rearing beliefs and practices will understand the importance of safe sleep behaviors and breastfeeding, and will effectively communicate their protective benefits and 3) Infant caregivers will be empowered, through knowledge, access to resources and confidence, to integrate safe sleep and breastfeeding within the realities of their lives.

NICHQ will guide *implementation of the National Action Plan* via the formation and facilitation of

**National Action Teams** comprised of National Coalition members who work together on specific goals related to promoting safe sleep and breastfeeding. NAPPSS-IIN will drive implementation of the National Action Plan through creating resources and leading trainings that support the conversational approach, specifically resources that support individualized and interactive communication in which infant caregivers receive sensitive and supportive messages about evidence-based infant sleep and breastfeeding practices. These conversations will occur in hospitals, WIC sites, during home visits and in child care settings. These resources will focus on engaging families in respectful, culturally appropriate dialogue that help identify and overcome barriers in integrating safe sleep and breastfeeding.

**3) Translate evidence-based practices into “safety bundles” —a small set of three to five evidence-based practices performed collectively and reliably in hospital settings, as well as social services and child care settings—to improve the likelihood that infant caregivers and families receive consistent, evidence-based instruction about safe sleep and breastfeeding.**

The NAPPSS-IIN safe infant sleep and breastfeeding bundle will be created, implemented tested and refined through an iterative process. The building of the safe infant sleep and breastfeeding bundle will be led by NICHQ improvement advisors and expert partners. An **Expert Advisory Committee** in collaboration with NICHQ Improvement Advisors and Evaluation Team will develop a cadre of structural, process and outcome measures to assess the implementation of the safety bundles and improvements in care and outcomes.

The bundle will initially be tested in five hospital pilot sites in Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, and Texas over a 15-month period and will follow the structure of a Learning Collaborative. Following the pilot, the bundle will be refined and implemented in the additional nine states, with an average of two hospitals within each state. In addition, the pilot sites (Cohort A) will expand to at least one additional hospital and will join with the additional hospitals to become a combined Cohort B. Cohort B will participate in a 15-month learning collaborative around implementation of the refined hospital bundle. Following this phase, the safety bundle will be adapted for use in social services settings, specifically WIC and home visiting programs for underserved populations and for use in child care settings.

## **EVALUATION**

All activities will be evaluated for effectiveness led by NICHQ’s Department of Applied Research and Evaluation. The focus of the evaluation will be to assess how to enhance success throughout the project, the extent to which project objectives and process measures toward achieving objectives are met, and ultimately what improvements can be attributed to the work of the initiative.