NC Department of Health and Human Services

North Carolina

SIDS Grief Counseling Program

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History

• Established July 1, 1975
  – Office of the Chief Medical Examiner within the Division of Public Health

• November 1, 1977 transferred to the Maternal and Child Health Branch, which is currently the Women’s Health Branch.

• For optimal statewide coverage utilizing volunteers among the health department staff was best practice.
Program Objectives

• Provision of timely grief support to families affected by an infant deaths that may be attributed to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or other sleep-related cause of death;

• Ongoing knowledge of and referral to a support network of parents who have experienced an infancy death event who are interested in helping other families;

• Training of new local SIDS Counselors as the need arises and annual continuing educational opportunities for current SIDS Counselors to enhance their knowledge and improve counseling skills;

• Education about SIDS and other sleep related cause of death in infancy for health professionals, public safety officials, and other community members;
Services

- Each county in the state of North Carolina has a lead and backup SIDS counselor or has an agreement in place to provide a trained grief counselor for their community.

- Notification of an infant death happens at both the state and local level
  - OCME
  - Outreach

- The SIDS Counselor assigned to the case receives support from the Program Manager at the Women’s Health Branch
Services

– Outreach
  • Condolence letter
  • Refresher letter

– Initial Home Visit
  • Build rapport
  • Referrals for immediate needs

– Subsequent Home Visit(s)
  • Review Autopsy report
  • Follow up on referrals

– Documentation
Training

• 1-day face to face training
  – Skill development in regard to providing grief support
  – Reading and understanding Autopsy reports

• Annual webinar
  – NC Safe Sleep Campaign at UNC Center for Maternal and Infant Health

• Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
Feel free to contact me with further questions:

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