PA PQC
Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative

Infant Safe Sleep 2024-2026 Final Initiative Report



Acknowledgements

“Thank you to our Safe Sleep Workgroup members and PA PQC healthcare teams!



We extend our greatest gratitude to the multidisciplinary workgroup that was convened from January to April 2023. This group created the driver diagram and metrics for the Infant Safe Sleep initiative. The group met several times to discuss and refine the materials to be used by participating PA PQC healthcare teams. Their feedback and perspectives were invaluable in the creation of the materials as well as establishing programming for the initiative.

We would also like to thank all PA PQC healthcare teams that enrolled in this work. Within the Infant Safe Sleep initiative, we saw a vitality from Neonatal teams that was unmatched by previous neonatal initiatives. We are grateful for your willing participation, your commitment to quality improvement, and your drive to keeping the smallest Pennsylvanians safe and healthy.



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Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative



Established in 2019, the Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PA PQC) is a statewide organization that aims to provide quality improvement support to healthcare teams with the goal of improving the standard of care for pregnant and postpartum people as well as their babies. The PA PQC envisions a future where every birthing person and baby born in Pennsylvania receives equitable, safe, and optimal care.

The PA PQC fosters momentum toward these goals by acting as an action arm of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee as well as the Child Death Review in Pennsylvania.

The PA PQC further supports healthcare teams by providing quality improvement coaching, convening stakeholders for peer-to-peer learning, providing staff trainings, encouraging collaboration across healthcare and community settings, sharing evidence-based practices, and collecting and sharing back state-wide data from participating healthcare teams.

The PA PQC has 5 core values integrated into all of the aforementioned work:

1. Equity
2. Lived experience
3. Evidence-based pratice
4. Data-driven approaches
5. Collaboration

Current State: Infant Safe Sleep

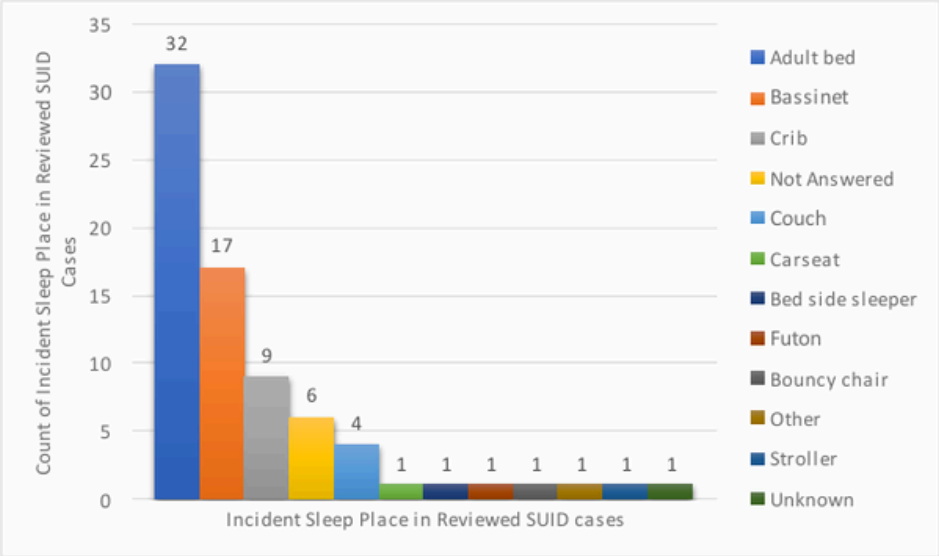


Figure 8: NFR-CRS, Year of Death 2022.

Although infant sleep-related deaths have decreased significantly since the 1990s, approximately 3,500 infants die from sleep-related deaths in the United States every year.

The 2022 updated policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) defines sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) as “any sudden and unexpected death, whether explained or unexplained, occurring during infancy.” An unexpected death that cannot be explained is described as SUID, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), or a death of undetermined cause. (1,2)

The 2024 PA Child Death Review Annual Report highlights that for deaths occurring in 2022, 90% of SUID cases had unsafe sleep factors present.

In the majority of these cases, the incident place was an adult bed, see Figure above from the 2024 Child Death Review Annual Report. Further, a safe sleep space was available in 62% of SUID cases that were reviewed.

In alignment with AAP recommendations, the Child Death Review Annual Report encourages:

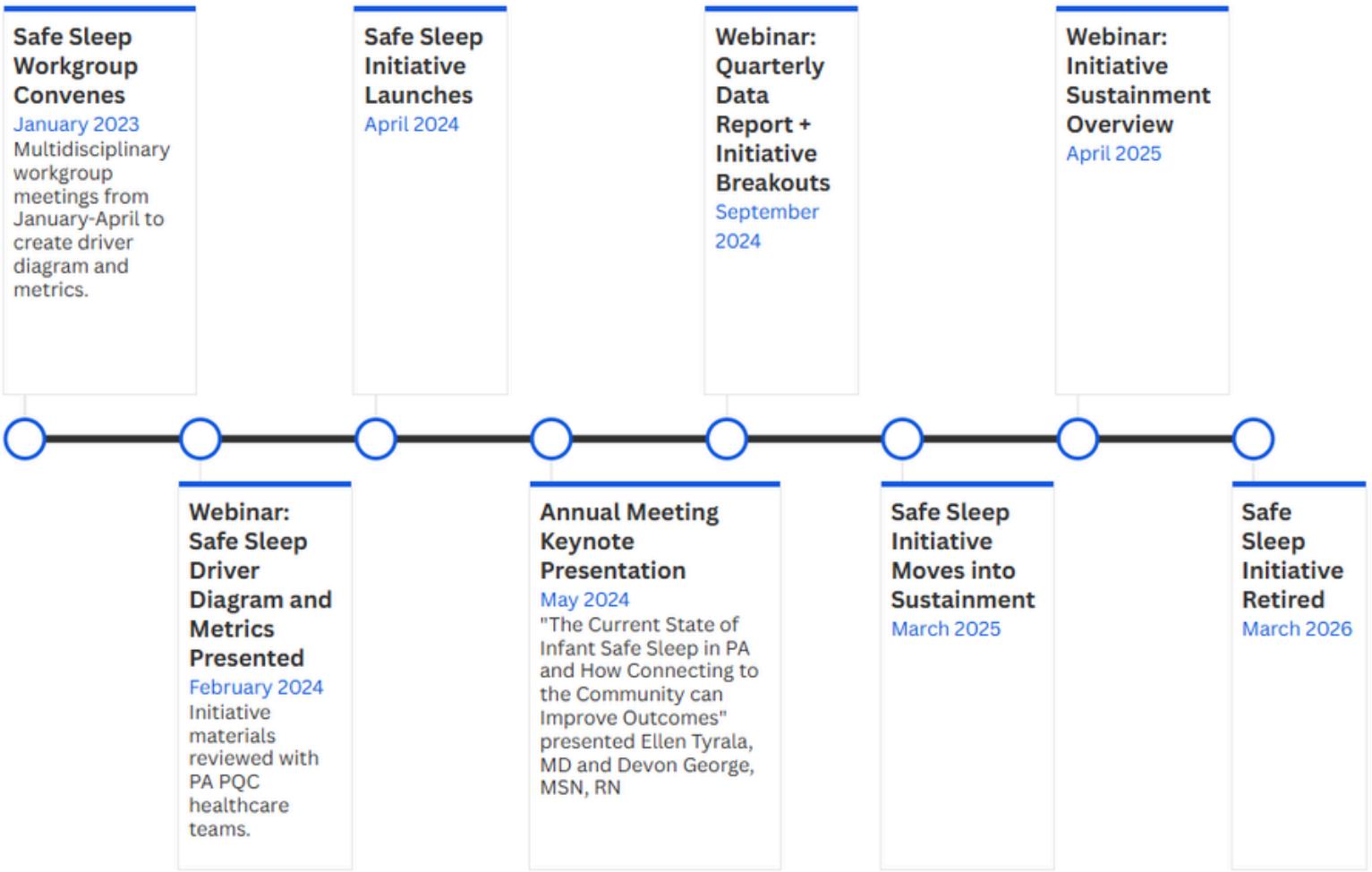
- Dissemination of information about hazards in the sleep environment to low-income and/or families who are unhoused or unstably housed.
- Conduct outreach to labor and delivery departments to make sure that they know what resources are available to new parents who may require additional supports.
- Have discussions with families about infant safe sleep options when they are tired. Consider having nonjudgmental conversations versus lectures about safe sleep. (3)

Infant Safe Sleep PA PQC Initiative

In April 2024, the PA PQC launched the Safe Sleep initiative with a focus on working in conjunction with, and expanding beyond, the amazing work of evidence-based programs focused on the inpatient stay (i.e., PA Safe Sleep and Cribs for Kids). Specifically, the PA PQC initiative had a 4-tiered focus:

1. Healthcare professionals understand, endorse, and model safe sleep practices.
2. Infant caregivers have knowledge, skills, and feel empowered to implement safe sleep practices.
3. Community champions promote safe sleep.
4. Policies support and facilitate safe sleep practices.

61 healthcare teams enrolled to participate in the Safe Sleep initiative.

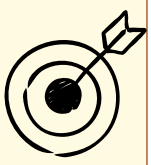
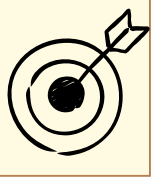


PA PQC Initiative Goals

Every year, the PA PQC sets state-wide, initiative-specific goals to focus healthcare team's quality improvement efforts within a broad array of possible key interventions.

The PA PQC uses baseline data to create SMART goals that are specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound.

Across a one-year active implementation period, PA PQC healthcare teams enrolled in the Safe Sleep initiative will...

1	...increase the number of healthcare teams partnering with organizations outside their healthcare system to promote consistent messaging for safe sleep education from 23 to 40.	41 teams fully in place!!	
2	...increase the number of healthcare teams that report conducting an environmental audit to identify safe sleep barriers within the last year from 24 to 40.	45 teams fully in place!!	



Other Safe Sleep Successes

Across a one-year active implementation period, PA PQC healthcare teams enrolled in the Safe Sleep initiative also increased from...

...7 to 31 teams had safe sleep education reviewed by patient partners
...29 to 44 teams partnered with external groups that provide safe sleep surfaces
...10 to 33 teams provide safe sleep materials in languages other than English and Spanish in OB and Peds offices
...28 to 43 teams provide safe sleep items at discharge (e.g., sleep sack)

PA PQC Annual Designations

Earning an Annual Designation recognizes healthcare teams' commitment to quality improvement work within the Infant Safe Sleep initiative.

16

teams completed quarterly quality improvement milestones

BRONZE

9

teams planned and executed a special project incorporating Patient Voice **or** Health Equity

SILVER

23

teams planned and executed special projects incorporating Patient Voice **and** Health Equity

GOLD

Sustaining the Gains



After the active implementation phase of all PA PQC Initaitives, there follows a one-year sustainment period. During this time PA PQC healthcare teams are expected to continue submitting and monitoring their data to ensure all implemented activities continue to maintain or improve when active work is no longer occurring.

The Safe Sleep initiative moved into sustainment in April 2025. Although not all teams continued to report data during the one year sustainment period, we did see successful maintenance of implemented interventions by the teams that completed quarterly reports from April 2025 through March 2026. We applaud these teams in their continuous work and monitoring throughout the sustainment period!

The PA PQC provides teams with a template sustainment plan focused on monitoring metric compliance and creating processes for ongoing, and new, staff education.

Following one year of sustainment, PA PQC initiatives are retired. However, all initiative materials and resources are maintained and remain accessible on the PA PQC website - www.papqc.org.

Funding Acknowledgements



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References

1. AAP Policy Statement - Sleep-Related Infant Deaths: Updated 2022 Recommendations for Reducing Infant Deaths in the Sleep Environment | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics
2. AAP Technical Report - Evidence Base for 2022 Updated Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment to Reduce the Risk of Sleep-Related Infant Deaths | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics
3. 2024 Child Death Review Annual Report

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