



**October 21, 2016**

**Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D.**  
Professor of the Practice  
Department of Health Policy & Management  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
624 N. Broadway Street  
Baltimore MD 21205

**Dear Dr. Sharfstein:**

**B'more for Healthy Babies (BHB) whole heartedly supports the ban on baby bumper pad sales. B'more for Healthy Babies is a collective impact strategy that was launched in 2009 to reduce the infant mortality rate (IMR) in Baltimore City. The vision of BHB is that all babies are born healthy, full-term, and ready to thrive in healthy families.**

**In 2009, Baltimore City had the fourth highest IMR for cities of comparable size in the United States at 13.5 deaths per 1000 live births. Over the last seven years, Baltimore's IMR has decreased by 38% to 8.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015, the lowest IMR ever recorded for the City. One critical contributor to this reduction was a 50% decrease in the number of infant sleep related deaths in this same time period from 27 in 2009 to 13 in 2015.**

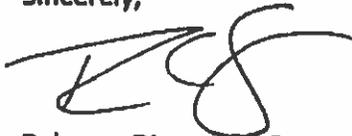
**In Baltimore City nearly every sleep-related infant death is due to an unsafe sleep environment, such as co-sleeping with an adult or sibling, sleeping in a crib or a bed with items such as pillows, blankets, crib bumpers, and stuffed animals, or exposure to smoke.**

**The messaging for BHB's SLEEP SAFE Campaign focuses on the baby sleeping Alone, on his or her Back, in a Crib, and in an environment where there is no smoke (Don't Smoke). This is better known as the "ABCDs" of Safe Sleep. This messaging stemmed from Baltimore City's Child Fatality Review in 2008 that was developed into a citywide social marketing campaign and is based on the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines. Today, posters and billboards can be seen across bus and metro stops and in barber shops, churches, community based organization centers, jury duty, and drug stores. The short films created for the campaign are played in every birthing hospital in Baltimore City prior to the mother being discharged after delivery and throughout multiple social media sites.**

**Banning baby bumper pad sales in Maryland in 2013 was critical to Baltimore's infant safe sleep campaign. The ban reinforces and promotes the messaging that babies must sleep alone. Baby bumper pads have been associated with suffocation and asphyxiation in young infants. In older infants, bumper pads are hazardous because infants can use them to climb out of a crib and fall.**

**Baltimore's SLEEP SAFE campaign has been used across Maryland and nationally to prevent infant deaths. Banning crib bumpers is critical to consistent messaging about how infants can sleep safely and reduces just one more risk factor that could result in an infant death.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RD', written over a horizontal line.

**Rebecca Dineen, M.S.**

**Assistant Commissioner, Maternal and Child Health**