

*Spokane Regional Health District's (SRHD) Child Fatality Review (CFR) is a multidisciplinary review of individual child deaths to enhance understanding of why Spokane County's children die and inform effective prevention of future child injury and mortality.*

Seventeen child deaths were reviewed through SRHD's CFR in 2024; these deaths occurred in 2023. Overall, 30 child deaths meeting the SRHD CFR case definition occurred in 2023. After the process had been inactive in Spokane County for over 10 years due to lack of funding, SRHD's CFR began midway through 2024, which is why not all 2023 child deaths meeting the SRHD CFR case definition were reviewed in 2024.

## Prevention Recommendations

Given findings from child deaths reviewed in 2024, to improve the health and safety of infants, children, and adolescents in Spokane County, there is a need for:



Increased access to firearm locking devices including lockboxes and safes, free community events such as classes or range days promoting firearm safety, and a widespread educational campaign about firearm safety including education about the importance of practicing safe firearm storage and firearm safety considerations for each stage of child development

Improved communication about safe infant sleep for parents, the whole family, and the community at large, including universal use of a nonjudgemental risk mitigation approach in conversations about bedsharing, recognizing that many parents bedshare with infants and should be informed about factors that further increase risk of sleep-related infant death while bedsharing, and education on the benefits of avoiding bedsharing



Increased promotion of existing, accessible mental health services, improved processes in existing services including pediatric primary care, emergency care, and interagency mental health referral systems to ensure adequate response to mental health concerns, and increased local programs for children and youth with mental health concerns or substance use disorder at all levels of care, including increased programs accessible to those with private insurance

# Prevention Action

In 2024, SRHD's Keeping Children Safe coordinator focused prevention efforts on sudden unexpected infant death, suicide, firearm injury, and motor vehicle collision injury. These efforts included the following activities.

## Access to Safe Sleep Surfaces and Firearm Locking Devices

- Distributed 120 pack-n-plays to local organizations to give to community members for free
- Distributed 465 firearm locking devices, including lockboxes, vaults, and trigger locks, to local organizations to give to community members for free

## Community Health Promotion Events

- Hosted a community baby shower, attended by 168 people, designed to improve maternal and child health by providing education and tangible resources to decrease injury risk and support overall perinatal health, including mental health
  - Included educational games, a vaccine clinic, opportunities to meet community partners and sign up for resources and programs, perinatal health and safety gift bags for every family, and raffles for pack-n-plays, car seats, breastfeeding essentials and postpartum recovery bundles, safe sleep clothing bundles, a keepsake bundle, and a bath safety bundle

## Local Systems Change

- Connected local emergency medical service (EMS) and mental health care providers and convened conversation about improvements to emergency mental health care services, resulting in exploration of contract solutions to improve EMS to inpatient mental health care

## Professional and Community Education

- Created [srhd.org/suicide](https://srhd.org/suicide) with data and comprehensive suicide prevention recommendations
- Distributed 4,690 printed copies of safe sleep education materials to local organizations
- Hosted and jointly facilitated a train the trainers workshop on safe firearm storage, educating professionals from six organizations across firearm retail and shooting range, health care, education, and social service environments
- Presented about safe sleep, suicide prevention, firearm safety, and child passenger safety during Facebook live events between October and December
- Presented on safe sleep recommendations and how to support families to prevent sudden unexpected infant death at the statewide Infant and Early Childhood conference, National Cribs for Kids conference, and the International HOPE Summit
- Produced safe firearm storage brochures and distributed 1,564 copies to local organizations
- Produced three videos about infant sleep patterns and baby settling techniques with a certified sleep consultant to support parents' and caregivers' ability to practice safer infant sleep
- Wrote about safe firearm storage in an op-ed for the Spokesman Review and an article for The Message, a publication of the Spokane County Medical Society

## Workgroup and Coalition Involvement

- Collaboratively planned current and future injury and violence prevention projects in the statewide safe firearm storage advisory group, Spokane County firearm violence prevention workgroup, Prevent Suicide Spokane Coalition, and a mini team for child passenger safety