



Ontario Public Health Association
l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario
Established/Établi 1949

The mission of OPHA is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.

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April 22nd, 2009

Heather McConnell,
Associate Director International Affairs and Best Practice Guidelines
Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
158 Pearl St
Toronto, On M5H 1L3
Fax: 416-599-1926 attn: IABPG

Dear Ms. McConnell,

**Re: In support of the development of a “Safe Sleep Practices for
Infants” Best Practice Guideline**

A “Safe Sleep Practices for Infants” Best Practice Guideline would positively impact the lives of infants, their parents and secondary caregivers (i.e., day care providers, home childcare providers, grandparents, babysitters). This is a significant issue, as the consequences of unsafe sleep practices can be devastating to families, health care professionals and communities. New and modifiable risk factors have recently been related to safe sleep practices for infants, resulting in conflicting information available for health professionals. This calls for timely dissemination of evidence-informed knowledge for professional nurses, both in acute care and community settings.

The OPHA Breastfeeding Promotion Workgroup is involved in advocacy of a provincial breastfeeding strategy for Ontario and this includes implementation of the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) which supports informed choice for parents related to sleeping arrangements for infants. It acknowledges that bed sharing can make breastfeeding easier and leads to increased breastfeeding success. When babies are distanced from their mothers, the mothers can miss babies' early cues for breastfeeding and also miss the important skin to skin contact which is a critical part of initiation. The BFI recognizes the importance of teaching to ensure safety when a parent decides to bed share.

A Best Practice Guideline would:

- 1) Clarify the evidence regarding safe sleeping practices for infants
- 2) Ensure consistent messaging for caregivers
- 3) Increase clients' capacity to make informed decisions regarding safe sleep for their infants
- 4) Promote translation of evidence to all levels and areas of nursing practice.
- 5) Protect best practice for the early establishment of breastfeeding

We wish to support this request for the development of "Safe Sleep Practices for Infants" RNAO Best Practice Guidelines. We would be willing to provide input into the process of developing the guidelines to ensure they are inclusive of breastfeeding management and behaviour.

Sincerely,



Carol Timmings
President