

SAFE *and* SOUND SLEEP

IU Health is dedicated to being part of the prenatal journey by educating parents on safe sleep practices and the value of breastfeeding, so babies born at IU Health start their journeys with health on their sides.

Sleep-related deaths are the third leading cause of infant deaths in Indiana, and many of these are preventable. Prior to her pregnancy, Tomisha Wilson had limited knowledge of safe sleep techniques for babies.

“On a scale of 1 to 10, I was probably at a 3,” said Tomisha, a former Ball State student and new mother of Dru, regarding her familiarity with safe sleep practices before coming to IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital.

Noticing a lack of awareness of safe sleep techniques and a high rate of infant mortality across the state, Indiana University Health started the Fetal Infant Mortality Review committee in partnership with Open Door Health Services, the Delaware County Health Department and other community-based organizations. Infant mortality is defined as the deaths of infants before their first birthday.

“If you can modify a behavior, then you can initiate positive change,” said Genice Smithson, RN, BSN and FIMR coordinator at IU Health Ball Memorial. “While our survey indicated better than expected awareness in some areas of safe sleep, there were other areas where

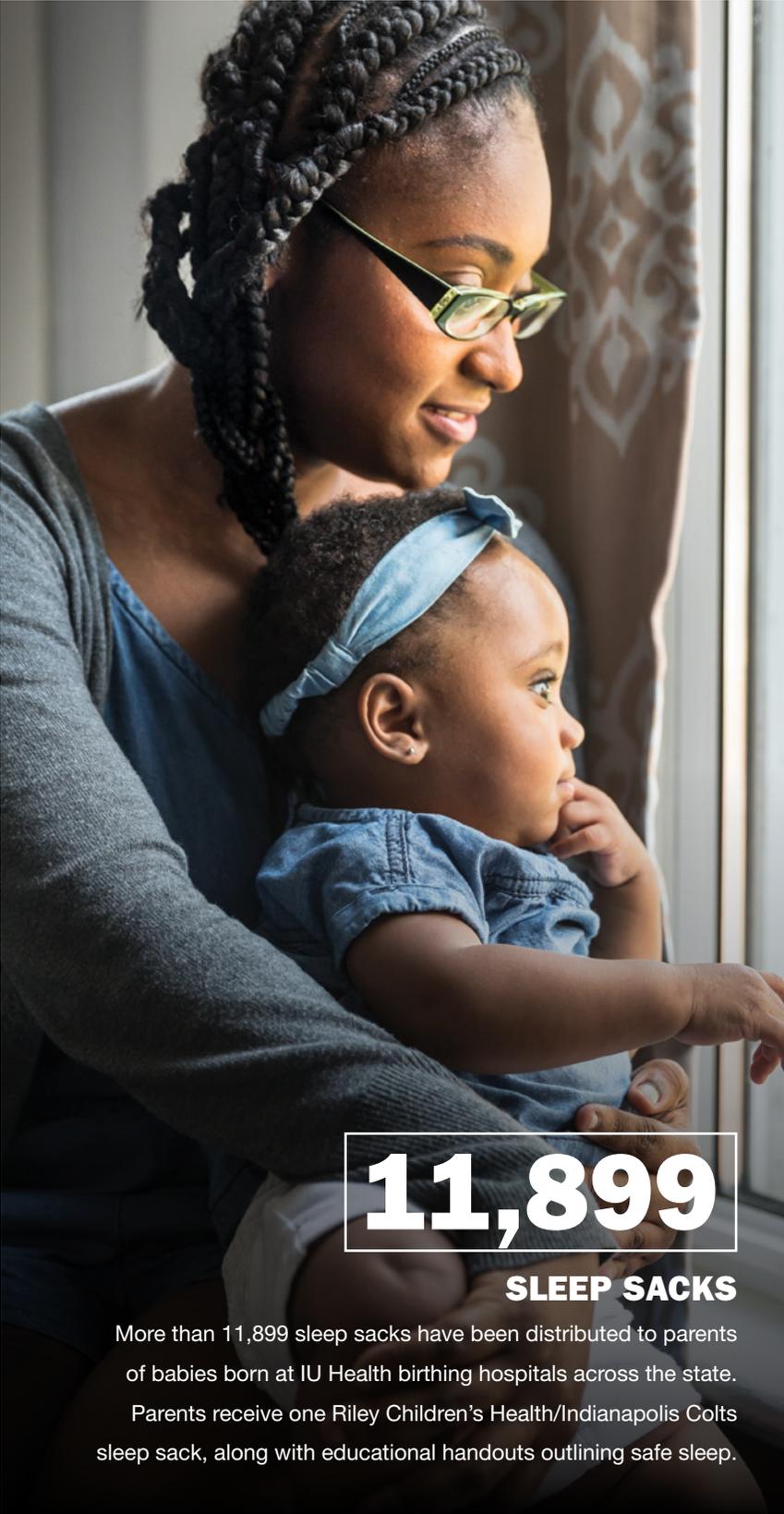
knowledge wasn’t as common, such as pacifier use when placing infants to sleep or babies not sleeping in car seats as referenced by the American Academy of Pediatrics.” One way IU Health is working to decrease infant mortality is by providing educational materials and sleep sacks.

“IU Health’s educational materials stress fundamentals like not using bumpers and making sure Dru is on her back when sleeping. They also talk about things like properly positioning her alignment and never using blankets loosely. I really like the sleep sacks for that because they meet her needs for both safety and warmth,” said Tomisha.

In addition to providing every infant born at an IU Health birthing hospital with a sleep sack, parents are taught the ABCs of safe sleep: Alone, on my Back, in my Crib. Actively teaching these safety tips lowers the risk of infant mortality and increases positive outcomes for Hoosier babies.

“I really appreciate the care and education given to my daughter and me within the IU Health network. Ever since Dru was born, IU Health has continued to support us with continued education and tools,” said Tomisha.

Baby Dru is healthy and getting ready to celebrate her first birthday. As Tomisha knows, the health of Hoosier babies starts before they are born with comprehensive prenatal care.

A photograph of a woman with her hair in braids, wearing glasses and a grey sweater, holding a baby. The baby is wearing a blue headband and a denim shirt. They are looking out a window with patterned curtains.

11,899

SLEEP SACKS

More than 11,899 sleep sacks have been distributed to parents of babies born at IU Health birthing hospitals across the state. Parents receive one Riley Children’s Health/Indianapolis Colts sleep sack, along with educational handouts outlining safe sleep.