Patient Education at University of Maryland Medical Center Impacts Infant Mortality

TeleHealth Services’ On-Demand Video Education Helps Reduce Baltimore’s Sleep-Related Infant Deaths to Lowest Rate Ever Recorded in the City

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Baltimore, MD and Raleigh, NC – The University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) is addressing sleep-related infant deaths with an interactive patient education and engagement system from TeleHealth Services. On-demand videos that are part of the interactive system educate patients about safe sleep best practices. UMMC is participating in a citywide plan that has helped reduce infant deaths by more than 50 percent in the last five years to the lowest sleep-related infant death rate ever recorded in the city of Baltimore.

In 2009, Maryland initiated a safe sleep campaign and asked hospitals to provide education and have mothers sign a safe sleep commitment. In 2012, the state set a goal to reduce infant mortality by 10 percent by 2017. The educational effort includes a video used in birthing hospitals in Baltimore that describes safe sleep practices. Safe sleep practices include babies sleeping on their own in a crib or bassinet with a firm mattress and tightly fitted sheet. No other items should be in the sleeping area. Babies should be dressed warmly and be placed on their backs.

TeleHealth’s SmarTigr patient education and engagement system is used to deliver the on-demand videos at UMMC. The system includes a comprehension assessment evaluation and clinical follow-up tool to ensure parents understand the best practices. Staff assign the education through a StaffConnect Dashboard that programs the videos for the new mother to view while she is in the hospital and then monitors the parents’ progress with the education curriculum.

Education is part of a plan that is saving lives

State governments have focused more on initiatives to reduce infant mortality rates. Across the nation, nearly six out of every 1,000 babies died at birth or in the first year of life in 2013. This is triple the rate of Japan and Norway and double the rate of Ireland, Israel and Italy according to the latest report from the National Center for Health Statistics. The Centers for Disease Control reports that the United States has a higher infant mortality rate than 25 other developed countries.

Baltimore’s “Sleep Safe” campaign is addressing the challenge with measurable success. Total sleep-related infant deaths attributed to the sleep environment have been reduced from 27 deaths in 2009 to 13 deaths in 2014.

UMMC is a magnet designated, 772-bed hospital with 56 inpatient units delivering major tertiary and primary care to more than 30,000 inpatients and 330,000 outpatients annually.

“We are proud of the progress we have made to ensure that parents understand the importance of ‘safe sleep’ best practices and the reduction in sleep-related infant deaths in Baltimore,” said Gena Stiver Stanek, MS, APRN-CNS, CNS-BC, clinical practice professional development coordinator at UMMC. “These are ongoing efforts to provide the best care and education for parents and their babies.”
“We look forward to continue developing technology and expertise to help UMMC achieve these results, save lives and improve patient education delivery for all conditions,” said Matt Barker, vice president for TeleHealth Services, the nation’s leading provider of hospital televisions and interactive patient engagement solutions. Barker is a board member for N.C. Healthy Start Foundation, a non-profit focused on decreasing infant mortality in North Carolina.

Video-based education has resulted in better retention for patients than conventional printed materials. Hospitals offering these services are seeing results that improve patient outcomes and reduce readmissions. “There is a national challenge to reduce infant deaths, and what we are doing with the University of Maryland Medical Center is a model for how we can address this challenge through better education and more advanced education delivery methods,” Barker said. “We’re helping hospitals transform the most-watched space in a hospital room – the television – into a clinical resource that improves health care.”

About TeleHealth Services:
With more than 2,500 healthcare clients across the country, TeleHealth Services is the nation’s leading provider of integrated technology and communications solutions for the healthcare market. Combining 50+ years of healthcare expertise and partnerships with industry-leading manufacturers, TeleHealth Services is uniquely positioned to offer a full suite of hospital technology solutions that includes:

- Interactive patient and staff education platforms
- Healthcare grade televisions and accessories
- Bedside patient entertainment solutions
- The latest educational and entertainment content
- Comprehensive design, implementation, and service packages
- Flexible financing solutions
- Complete healthcare audio visual solutions

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