Over the last year and a half, the Family Birth Center and pediatric inpatient units at Comer Children’s Hospital at The University of Chicago have been working on safe sleep initiatives. Safe sleep should be modeled in the hospital after birth to promote safe sleep behaviors after discharge. Safe sleep is defined for staff and families as sleeping alone, in a supine position, and in a crib for all sleep. Some of the goals of the national safe sleep initiatives are to provide cribs that are certified by the organization Cribs for Kids (cribsforkids.org) and to make a difference in the sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and sudden unexpected infant death rates.

The Family Birth Center and pediatric inpatient units have been selected to participate in the National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep-Improvement Innovation Network (NAPPSS-IIN) Cohort B; this partnership will also add interventions needed to improve breast-feeding rates as well as safe sleep compliance during prenatal visits, hospitalization, and after discharge. NAPPSS-IIN is a national quality improvement project designed to help transform safe sleep habits and breast-feeding compliance throughout the United States. A multidisciplinary team from the Family Birth Center, pediatric inpatient units, and community outreach programs will partner to implement a bundle approach to promote breast-feeding and safe sleep behaviors during this project.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has indicated several safe sleep recommendations that all pediatric providers should know. These recommendations should be applied in the hospital setting and at home. One of the most important concepts I have learned through working in hospital quality improvement (QI) as well as in caring for our grandchildren at home is the importance of modeling behaviors that you would like caretakers to teach parents in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), nursery, mother-baby unit, on the pediatric floor, and at home.2,4

One of the hospital QI safe sleep initiatives at The University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children’s Hospital is to educate and model safe sleep of infants who are hospitalized; this has been organized by Drs. Nicola Meyer-Orlov and Nicole Hamp, and Emily Frey. “Safe sleep practice compliance was evaluated before and after education and a 12.5% improvement was found in overall compliance. Significant improvements were made in ensuring that cribs are without extra objects and infants are not over covered.”5

One of the recommendations is to avoid the use of commercial devices that are inconsistent with safe sleep recommendations.6 “We cannot put any more children’s lives at risk by keeping these dangerous products on the shelves,” said Dr. Rachel Moon, chair of the AAP Task Force on SIDS. “The Rock ‘n Play inclined sleeper should be removed from the market immediately. It does not meet the AAP’s recommendations for a safe sleep environment for any baby. Infants should always sleep on their back, on a separate, flat and firm sleep surface without any bumpers or bedding.” The AAP does not recommend inclined sleep products or any prod-
ucts for sleep that require restraining a baby. The AAP advises against using car seats, strollers, or other devices for sleep because of the risk that a baby could roll or turn into an unsafe position and be incapable of moving, leading to suffocation or strangulation.7

Safe sleep begins after birth, continues in the hospital, NICU, and at home. Let us, as providers, be attentive to these recommendations and model them in the hospital setting and in the care of our own infant family members.

REFERENCES