



STATE OF MARYLAND

# DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **Sale of Hazardous Baby Bumper Pads to be Banned in Maryland** *Babies Sleep Best “Alone, on their Back, and in a Crib”*

**BALTIMORE** (November 16, 2012) – Following an 18-month investigation into the safety of baby crib bumper pads, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) has published final regulations to ban their sale in Maryland effective June 21, 2013.

The action follows the Department’s conclusion that baby crib bumper pads, intended for infants up to the age of five or six months, offer no meaningful benefit and pose a potentially serious risk to infant health. The Maryland chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Med Chi, and numerous safety experts agreed with this conclusion and urged the Department to prohibit the sale of these products. Maryland’s Chief Medical Examiner has found that crib bumper pads pose a risk of suffocation and death.

“Our safety message is that babies sleep best alone, on their back, and in a crib,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of DHMH. “Baby bumper pads are not part of this picture, and in fact can pose a serious threat to health.”

Reducing the infant mortality rate is one of the strategic goals of the O'Malley-Brown Administration. As one of a number of initiatives to help achieve this goal, starting in April 2011, the Department held two advisory committee meetings and four public comment periods to assess the potential risks and benefits of baby bumper pads. Experts found that potential risks included suffocation and strangulation. In addition, if left in the crib past the appropriate age, infants can use the bumper pads to climb out of the crib and fall. Experts did not find evidence to support a meaningful benefit of fewer injuries to limbs against the wood slats of the crib. The American Academy of Pediatrics recently described the products as “inherently risky and unnecessary.”

“Pediatricians in Maryland urge parents to keep their cribs free of blankets, stuffed animals, pillows, and baby bumper pads,” said Dr. Scott Krugman, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center and President of the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. “We are pleased to see Maryland lead in protecting infants.”

The regulation defines baby bumper pads as “a pad or pads of non-mesh material resting directly above the mattress in a crib, running the circumference of the crib or along any of the interior sides of the crib, and intended to be used until the age that an infant pulls to stand.” The ban does not apply to vertical bumpers that wrap tightly around each individual crib rail or to mesh crib liners. The Department nonetheless does not recommend the use of these or other novel products.

The regulation allows the Department to alter its approach should industry standards be developed that are protective of children. However, in finalizing the regulation, the Department has concluded that existing industry standards do not pass this test.

Additional information from the National Institutes of Health on safe sleep can be found at:  
[http://nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/upload/safe\\_sleep\\_general\\_brochure\\_2012.pdf](http://nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/upload/safe_sleep_general_brochure_2012.pdf)

Additional information on Maryland's regulatory process can be found at:  
<http://www.dhmf.maryland.gov/SitePages/crib-bumper.aspx>

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