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Background

- Despite decreasing incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in Canada and around the world, infants continue to die during sleep-related circumstances
- To address this, Alberta Health Services' (AHS) Safe Infant Sleep (SIS) Initiative was established in 2009
- The goal of the Initiative is to support standardized practices across the province through evidence informed SIS key messages, resources and policy

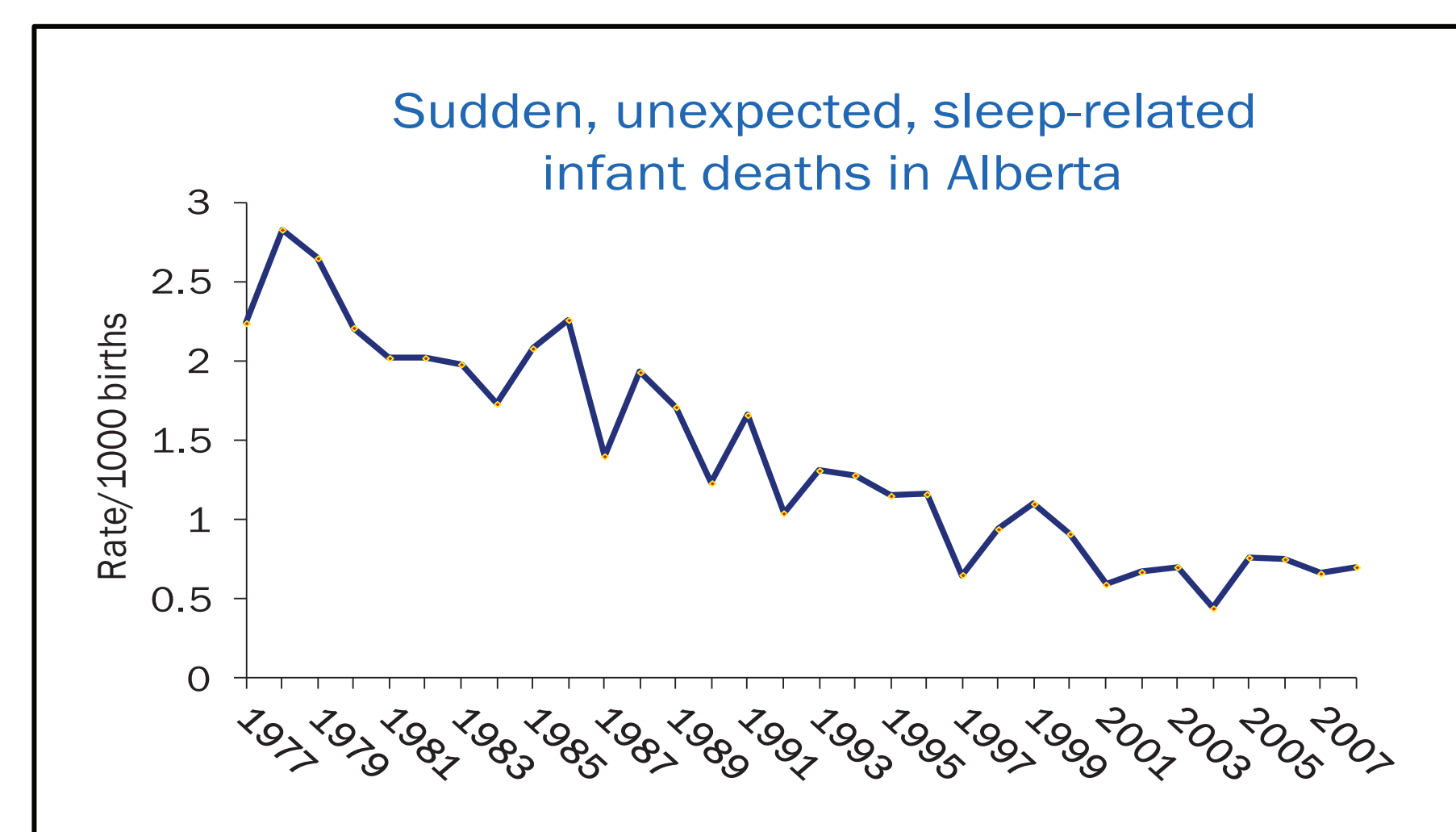
The Issue

- SIDS is defined as the sudden death of an infant aged less than one year, that remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of an autopsy, examination of the death scene and review of clinical history
- The term SIDS was coined for these deaths in mid 1950s and it's now recognized that multiple factors are involved
- Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) also known as Sudden Unexplained Death (SUD) in sleep-related circumstances includes SIDS, strangulation, asphyxiation, Accidental Suffocation and Strangulation deaths in Bed (ASSB), Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) and 'undetermined' causes. SIDS is the leading cause of death in this category
- Canadian statistics indicate that:
 - SIDS rate declined from 78.4/100,000 to 34.6/100,000 live births in 2001 to 2005
 - SIDS remains the 5th leading cause of infant mortality



Alberta Statistics

- Between 2005 and 2010, there were at least 172 SUID in sleep related circumstances
 - 114 were classified as SIDS while 48 were classified as SUD, SUDI and unexplained, natural causes.
 - Co-sleeping with a parent or sibling (bed-sharing) was a factor in 42% of the deaths in the SIDS category and 74% of deaths in the SUD, SUDI and unexplained, natural causes category



All SUID deaths in Alberta between 1977 to 2007 were re-coded using the standard SIDS definition with data abstracted from the Alberta Office of Chief Medical Examiner by Dr. Ian Mitchell, University of Calgary.

Provincial Response

- An AHS advisory group of key stakeholders from across the continuum of care guided the Initiative
- A situational analysis and environmental scan were completed to identify safe sleep practices and resources across the province
- Surveys of healthcare professionals and parents were conducted to determine knowledge, beliefs and practices related to SIS. Based on the findings, the following were developed:
 - evidence-based key messages (aligned with messages supported by Alberta Health and Health Canada)
 - standardized resources for parents and healthcare professionals
 - AHS SIS Policy
- Evaluation of the SIS policy is in progress

AHS SIS Policy

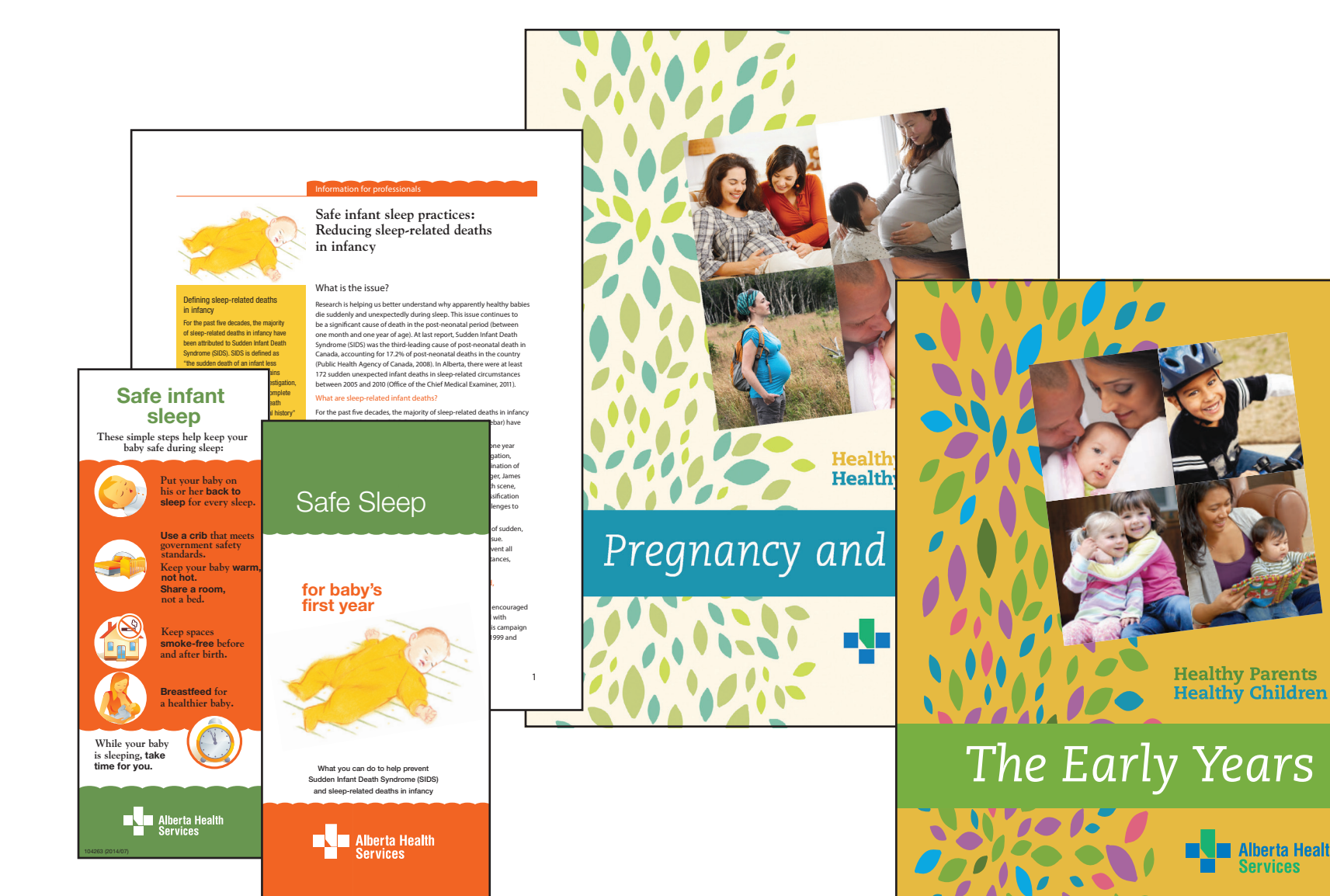
- Purpose:
 - To facilitate consistent safe sleep practices and environments across maternal/infant continuum of care
 - To provide key messages, recommendations and role modeling by healthcare professionals
- Implemented on January 20th, 2014
- Targets all AHS employees, medical and midwifery staff, students, volunteers and others acting on behalf of AHS

What can you do?

- Include a sleep history in all infant assessments
- Discuss SIS at every visit:
 - Pre-conception
 - Prenatal
 - Postpartum
 - Well Child checkups
 - Acute care contacts
- Provide evidence informed key messages:
 - Back to sleep – EVERY sleep
 - Choose a safe place:
 - Firm, flat mattress
 - Crib/cradle/bassinet that meets government safety standards
 - Bumper pads not recommended
 - Avoid crib clutter (toys, heavy blankets, sheepskins, etc.)
 - Room-sharing for at least the first 6 months
 - Bed-sharing is NOT recommended
 - Prevent overheating
 - Protect infant from tobacco exposure – before conception, in pregnancy and after birth
 - Encourage breastfeeding for good health

Resources

- For healthcare professionals:
 - Fact Sheet
 - AHS SIS Policy
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - Education webinars on AHS website
 - Alberta Perinatal Professionals Electronic Library (APPEL) Module on SIS
- For parents:
 - Healthy Parents, Healthy Children resources online and print copies – visit HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca
 - Brochure
 - Bookmark
 - Commonly Asked Questions



Contact

For more information on the SIS Initiative and resources, please email:

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