

Testimony by Jaspreet Loyal In Support of
(Bill No. 258): An Act Concerning Infant Safe Sleep
Practices

Committee on Public Health

February 17th, 2015

Submitted by Jaspreet Loyal

Senators Looney, Duff, Gerratana, Bye, Coleman, Crisco, Flexer, Kennedy, Leone, Moore, Winfield, Distinguished Members of the Committee on Public Health:

I am the Medical Director of the Well Newborn Nursery at Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH) and have been in my current role for three years. I provide direct medical care to term and late preterm healthy newborns delivered at YNHH. A large part of providing preventive care to our newborns and families involves delivering anticipatory guidance, teaching parents how to safely care for their newborns and role model these behaviors in our hospital. My administrative responsibilities include overseeing policies that affect the delivery of safe and quality care to our patients. I also spend time in our outpatient Yale Pediatric Primary Care Clinic caring for families with Medicaid insurance who have established their healthcare with us. Many of these newborns are born at YNHH.

I am writing in support of the Proposed Bill No. 258. It is clear that unsafe sleep practices can result in largely preventable deaths amongst infants and it is our responsibility to educate our families about this risk starting at birth. We have a particularly vulnerable population of patients in our Pediatric Primary Care clinic many of whom struggle with socioeconomic challenges, mental health and drug issues, all contributing factors to parenting skills and infant safety. In my experience, our families benefit from hearing anticipatory guidance repeatedly and the best place to start is at birth in the hospital. Counseling parents about safe sleep practices begins on admission to our Mother Baby unit at YNHH where verbal and written education is initiated by our nursing staff and reinforced by additional staff and pediatric providers during the course of the hospital stay. On a daily basis, I continue to see unsafe sleep practices which include co-bedding, using multiple thick blankets in the bassinet and having soft toys and/or baby supplies in the bassinet. Fortunately, many of our families and their caregivers are receptive to the education we provide regarding the importance of safe sleep practices. I strongly believe that the hospital is an appropriate and important setting to provide informational materials regarding safe sleep practices and should be the case in all birthing hospitals in Connecticut. Families are a captive audience in these settings. In addition, we have the opportunity to observe whether or not the education is being practiced, identify additional caregivers who may be unaware of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations and offer encouragement and support where needed.

For the reasons above, I support Bill No. 258.

Respectfully submitted,

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