



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

Office of Communications

*Dori Henry
Karen Black
410-767-6490*

Department to Request Public Comment on Proposal to Ban Sale of Crib Bumper Pads in Maryland

Baltimore, MD (September 27, 2011) -- The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene today announced that it will publish for public comment a proposal to ban the sale of crib bumper pads for infants starting in January 2013. The Department also released a document summarizing the evidence and providing the basis for its action. The proposed ban is part of a broader effort to promote safe sleep for infants by encouraging the ABCs: Babies should sleep Alone, on their Backs, and in a Crib.

The proposal follows a public input and review process. As part of this process, a panel of health experts, after reviewing available data, evidence and public comments and holding two public meetings, concluded that the risks associated with the use of crib bumper pads in infant cribs outweigh potential benefits.

“Our priority is the health of infants in Maryland,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of DHMH. “We agree with our expert advisors that based on all available evidence, these products pose an unnecessary risk to infants.”

The proposal is in the “informal” stage, meaning that the Department will consider public comments before deciding whether to proceed to a formal proposal under the state’s administrative procedures. This is a step that the Department can take when additional input may be helpful. Today’s proposal on infant crib bumper pads includes several specific questions for public input.

The Department’s investigation into crib bumper pads commenced on April 22, 2011, with the publication in the Maryland Register of a request for public comments. Secretary Sharfstein then appointed a panel of health experts to review the comments and other available evidence, and to advise the Department on whether action regarding the use of bumper pads was warranted. The panel held two public meetings, on May 20, 2011 and July 13, 2011.

The Department reviewed all comments, documents and transcripts from the meetings, and determined that the risk of death from crib bumper pads, while rare, is real, and is not offset by commensurate benefits.

The proposed ban would apply to pads intended to be used around the sides of a crib until the age that an infant is able to pull to stand. This would exclude pads for older infants or for children who have special needs. The proposal would prohibit the sale of the crib bumper pads beginning on January 1, 2013, in order to allow for considerable public education in the context of the “safe sleep” message.

All comments should be submitted by 5 p.m. November 4, 2011. Comments may be submitted by mail to Michele Phinney, Director, Office of Regulation and Policy Coordination, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 201 W. Preston Street, Room 512, Baltimore, MD 21201, or call 410-767-6499, TTY: 800-735-2258, or by email to regs@dhmh.state.md.us, or by fax to 410-767-7483.

###