



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Office of the Secretary

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**Jim Justice**  
Governor

**Bill J. Crouch**  
Cabinet Secretary

January 20, 2017

The Honorable Mitch Carmichael, President  
West Virginia Senate  
Room 229M, Building 1  
State Capitol Complex  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

The Honorable Tim Armstead, Speaker  
West Virginia House of Delegates  
Room 228M, Building 1  
State Capitol Complex  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear President Carmichael and Speaker Armstead:

As required by West Virginia Code §16-1-6(p), regarding Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID), please find enclosed the SUID report for calendar year 2014. This report is provided by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources through the Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.

If additional information is needed, you may contact Christina Mullins, Director, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health, at (304) 356-4392 or e-mail at [christina.r.mullins@wv.gov](mailto:christina.r.mullins@wv.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill J. Crouch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Bill J. Crouch  
Cabinet Secretary

BJC/vc

Enclosure

cc: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP  
Anne Williams  
Christina Mullins  
Steve Harrison  
Clark Barnes  
Legislative Library



SUDDEN UNEXPLAINED INFANT DEATH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
January through December 2014

Sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) is any infant death (a child under one year of age) that is unexpected and initially unexplained. Sudden unexplained infant death describes the sudden death of an infant which remains unexplained following autopsy, review of medical records and death investigation performed by the medical examiner. Characteristically, these deaths occur quickly and usually during a sleep period; in most cases, the baby seems healthy. Both are referred to as SUID since all are unexpected and most are ultimately determined unexplained.

These unexplained deaths were formerly attributed to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), but recognition by the medical community of limitations in detecting accidental and non-accidental asphyxia in infancy has led to a nationwide change in diagnostic terminology. As a consequence, the use of "SUID," a diagnostic term which encompasses the possible contribution of asphyxia, as well as other avoidable injuries, to sudden infant death, has gradually replaced the "diagnosis" of SIDS. SUIDs is now the major cause of death in babies from one month to one year of age.

During calendar year 2014, there were thirty-four (34) resident SUID deaths reported by the West Virginia Health Statistics Center. These infant deaths were identified with a cause of death listed on the death certificate as ICD codes R95–R99 (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Other Sudden Death, Cause Unknown and Other Ill-Defined and Unspecified Causes of Mortality) and W75 (Accidental Suffocation and Strangulation in Bed). These unexpected/unexplained infant deaths are the deaths included in this report.

Medical examiner investigators identify SUID risk factors that include hazardous

sleeping environments such as co-sleeping/bed-sharing, very soft or uneven bedding surfaces and heavy bedding, as well as maternal smoking during pregnancy and smoke exposure in the home. The findings are recorded on death certificates and in autopsy reports for the use of public health and safety professionals.

The following tables offer summaries of the demographics and identified risk factors of those deaths occurring to West Virginia resident infants during calendar year 2014. Data reporting sources include the West Virginia Health Statistics Center, West Virginia Birth Score Program and West Virginia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Demographics and risk factors include the month of death, county of residence, age at death, sex of infant, race of infant, the position of the infant when placed to sleep and position found, type of bedding, smoking status of mother during pregnancy, smoking status in the home, prenatal care initiation, co-sleeping/bed-sharing, gestation, birthweight, Birth Score, Medicaid status and caretaker impairment. It is important to note that information on out of state births and deaths is not always available and is therefore shown as “unknown.” Also, information for in-state births and deaths that is missing or left blank on the investigative report or other documents is shown as “unknown.”

Research shows that firm bedding, placing the infant on his/her back to sleep in an appropriate infant sleep product such as a crib, not smoking cigarettes prenatally or exposing infant to second hand smoke and not co-sleeping/bed-sharing with the infant can be effective preventive measures in reducing SUIDs.

The Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health (OMCFH) has been an ongoing participant in the national *Back to Sleep* campaign since its inception in 1996 and continues to participate in the expanded *Safe to Sleep* campaign. The Office continues to disseminate pertinent, current information about risk factors such as co-sleeping/bed-sharing, early prenatal care, maternal smoking during pregnancy, infant exposure to

second hand smoke and a safe sleeping environment. The Office also continues to make ongoing efforts to provide current, relevant educational material statewide to health care providers as well as parents, grandparents and other caregivers of West Virginia's infants.

**WEST VIRGINIA SUIDS**  
**Sudden Unexpected/Unexplained Infant Deaths**  
**January through December 2014**

It is important to note that information on out of state births and deaths is not always available and is therefore shown as “unknown.” Also, information for in-state births and deaths that is missing or left blank on the investigative report or other documents is shown as “unknown.”

Deaths by Month												
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
3	2	3	5	3	1	2	0	3	3	6	3	34

Deaths by Sex of Infant		
Male	Female	Total
21	13	34

Deaths by Race of Infant				
White	Black	Bi-Racial	Unknown	Total
31	2	0	1*	34

\*out of state birth with no information available

Deaths by County of Residence							
Berkeley	Boone	Cabell	Hampshire	Harrison	Jefferson	Kanawha	Lewis
2	1	4	1	2	1	4	1
Lincoln	McDowell	Mercer	Mineral	Mingo	Monongalia	Morgan	Putnam
1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Raleigh	Summers	Upshur	Wayne	Wood	Wyoming		Total
2	1	1	1	2	1		34

Deaths by Age of Infant in Months						
<1	1	2	3-5	6-8	9-12	Total
6	6	4	13	5	0	34

Deaths by Infant Birth Weight*			
Normal	Low	Unknown	Total
24	9	1**	34

\*Normal:  $\geq 2500$  grams Low:  $< 2500$  grams

\*\*out of state birth with no information available

Deaths by Gestation*			
Full Term	Premature	Unknown	Total
25	8	1**	34

\*Full Term:  $\geq 37$  weeks Premature:  $< 37$  weeks

\*\*out of state birth with no information available

Deaths by Co-Sleeping/Bed-Sharing			
Yes Co-Sleeping/Bed-Sharing	No Co-Sleeping/Bed-Sharing	Unknown*	Total
20	10	4*	34

\*includes 3 out of state deaths – no death scene investigation information available

Deaths by Type of Prenatal Care				
Early Prenatal Care*	Late Prenatal Care	No Care	Unknown**	Total
14	17	1	2**	34

\*entered first trimester

\*\*out of state births with no prenatal care information available

Deaths by Type of Bedding			
Appropriate Bedding	Hazardous Bedding*	Unknown**	Total
0	29	5**	34

\*any bedding other than crib with no other sleeping environment risks

\*\*includes 3 out of state deaths – no death scene investigation information available

<b>Deaths by Position of Infant Placed to Sleep</b>				
On Back	On Side	On Stomach	Unknown*	Total
20	3	3	8*	34

\*includes 3 out of state deaths – no death scene investigation information available

<b>Deaths by Position of Infant When Found</b>				
On Back	On Side	On Stomach	Unknown*	Total
10	6	9	9*	34

\*includes 3 out of state deaths – no death scene investigation information available

<b>Deaths by Smoking Status of Mother During Pregnancy</b>			
Smoking	Non-Smoking	Unknown	Total
25	8	1*	34

\* out of state birth – no information available

<b>Deaths by Smoking Status in the Home</b>			
Smoking	Non-Smoking	Unknown*	Total
15	8	11*	34

\*includes 3 out of state deaths – no death scene investigation information available

<b>Deaths by Birth Score*</b>			
Low	High	Unknown	Total
10	13	11**	34

\*scores above 99 considered high and at risk infants, scores below 99 considered normal and low risk infants

\*\*includes 8 out of state births – no Birth Score conducted

<b>Deaths by Medicaid Status</b>			
Yes	No	Unknown	Total
28	2	4	34



<b>Deaths by Caretaker Drug/Alcohol Impaired*</b>			
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
4	12	18**	34

\*variable first added in CY 2011 report due to number of cases indicating impairment but still not captured consistently

\*\*includes 3 out of state deaths – no death scene investigation information available