

CalvertHealth implements infant CPR program to every new mom

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 02/20/2019

Prince Frederick, MD – Ten seconds. According to the American Heart Association, if CPR is started within 10 seconds of a person - of any age - becoming unresponsive due to a cardiac event, they have the best chance of reviving them. Every second that the heart is not pumping oxygen-rich blood, brain cells begin to die. For parents and caregivers of infants and young children, having the knowledge to recognize and act in an emergency is crucial.

To meet that need, CalvertHealth Medical Center's (CHMC) Center for Family Birth Care has initiated the American Heart Association's Infant CPR Anytime® Training program to educate parents on basic life saving techniques before they leave the hospital with their baby.

The program, recognized as the first of its kind in Maryland, combines in-hospital, in-room training by video followed by the mom doing a return demonstration with a nurse. A take-home training kit with a practice manikin will allow parents to continue infant CPR training with family members, siblings, babysitters and other caregivers who will have contact with their baby.

"We know that the days and weeks after a child's birth are hectic and exhausting for new parents. That's why we designed this program - to provide infant CPR training before moms are discharged from the hospital," said CHMC CPR Coordinator Wendy Cox, who is also an American Heart Association (AHA) coordinator of CPR training.

In 2018, CHMC delivered 629 babies—but only a fraction of the parents or caregivers of those babies attended any of the parenting and infant CPR training offered through the Community Wellness Department, said Cox.

"The gap in the number of babies born versus parents learning infant lifesaving skills was alarming to me. If we could train 100 percent of parents on what to do if a child is choking, non-responsive or not breathing—before they leave the hospital—who would not be on-board with that," said Cox.

The Centers for Disease Control estimates that there are about 3,600 infants who die in the U.S. every year while sleeping in an unsafe sleeping environment. Unintentional suffocation is a leading cause of all injury deaths for infants under the age of one according to AHA. Every year, Maryland has an average of 55 sleep-related deaths in the state—that's more than one infant dying every week from a largely preventable cause, according to the Maryland Patient Safety Center.

"One death is one death too many," said CHMC Center for Family Birth Care Director Donna Arnstein, who along with Cox initiated the push to establish the Infant CPR Anytime® Training at CalvertHealth. "Currently, our nurses work with moms after delivery teaching them all aspects of newborn care —this program will reinforce and add to the knowledge base of new parents," said Arnstein.

The take-home kits, co-branded with the American Academy of Pediatrics, include everything parents and other caregivers need to learn the lifesaving skills of infant CPR and infant choking relief in about 20 minutes, including a baby CPR personal manikin, a bilingual DVD and a skills reminder card. CHMC covers the entire cost of the kits.

As a healthcare professional with more than 10 years of CPR training, Cox knows that the more practice in CPR training a person goes through, the more confident and calm they will be in an emergency.

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