



Vannessa L. Dorantes  
Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES**  
*Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities*



Ned Lamont  
Governor

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**WHAT:** A demonstration of how social workers **prevent tragic infant deaths** by educating families in their homes about how to maintain safe sleep conditions. Department of Children and Families (DCF) Commissioner Vannessa Dorantes, the Office of the Child Advocate, and other state officials will talk about how the “simulation lab” training program helps prepare social workers to effectively engage families in keeping their children safe. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and this affords the media an opportunity to **educate the public about how to prevent tragic infant fatalities**.

**WHEN: Monday, April 8, 2019 at 11 a.m.**

**WHERE:** On the grounds of the Department of Veteran’s Affairs located at **287 West Street, Rocky Hill, CT**. Upon entry to the grounds at the security check point, signs will direct media to the building where the press conference and demonstration will take place.

**WHO:** Family advocates from FAVOR (an organization representing families receiving services related to child protection, mental health, substance use, and juvenile justice) will play the role of family members as DCF social workers receive experiential training that will help them effectively engage families. The family advocates and the social workers will conduct role-playing exercises intended to teach DCF staff how to most effectively interact with families and achieve the best outcomes for their children.

**WHY:** Approximately **3,500 infants die each year** in the United States resulting from unsafe sleep environments, according to the Center for Disease Control. In Connecticut, we know of 47 unsafe sleep deaths from 2011 through 2018.

**NOTE FOR VIDEOGRAPHERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS:** The demonstrations will occur in rooms that are made to look like apartments or homes similar to those families live in. Camera operators will be able to capture the demonstrations.

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