



Dena Murphy
Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February is Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness Month in Kern County

(Bakersfield, CA) – On **Tuesday, February 5th**, the Kern County **Board of Supervisors** will proclaim the month of February as “Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness Month” during their 9:00 AM meeting. The Safely Surrendered Baby Coalition is planning a series of events throughout Kern County to bring attention to this important law.

71 babies have been safely surrendered in Kern County since we began tracking those babies in 2006, including 8 in 2018.

For most people, the birth of a child is a happy occasion celebrated with family and friends. But for some women, childbirth becomes a crisis - and the decisions made following an infant's birth can be a matter of life or death for the child. The Safely Surrendered Baby Law responds to the situation of newborn infant deaths due to abandonment in unsafe locations. First signed into law in January 2001, the Safely Surrendered Baby Law became permanent in January 2006. The law's intent is to save the lives of newborn infants at risk of abandonment by encouraging parents or persons with lawful custody to safely surrender the infant **within 72 hours of birth**, with no questions asked. The law exists so that these infants will not be harmed because the mother abandons them, or fails to provide them with care, sometimes leaving them to die.

Join us in celebrating the men and women who make this law possible as we hold a press conference at **Dignity Health Memorial Hospital, 420 34th Street**, on **Thursday, February 7th at 11:00 a.m. in the Children's Healing Garden**. Additionally, several cities in Kern County will be presenting proclamations.

Delano City Council will proclaim Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness month at their City Council meeting on **Monday, February 4th at 5:30 P.M.**

Taft City Council will proclaim Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness month at their City Council meeting on **Tuesday, February 5th at 6:00 P.M.**

Shafter City Council will proclaim Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness month at their City Council meeting on **Tuesday, February 5th at 7:00 P.M.**

Bakersfield City Council will proclaim Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness month at their City Council meeting on **Wednesday, February 7th at 5:15 P.M.**

Arvin City Council will proclaim Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness month at their City Council meeting on **Tuesday, February 12th at 5:30 P.M.**

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Kern County Department of Human Services is an equal opportunity employer.

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Ridgecrest City Council will proclaim Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness month at their City Council meeting on **Wednesday, February 20th at 6:00 P.M.**

Additional presentations will be made at community collaborative meetings throughout Kern County. A complete list of presentation times and location can be found at www.KCDHS.org.

Throughout Kern County, a newborn baby can be safely surrendered into the hands of any hospital emergency room or Fire Station staff. The Safely Surrendered Baby Coalition, under the coordination of the Department of Human Services, works to educate all Kern County residents about this important law. The coalition is made up of a small group of dedicated individuals representing a long list of agencies, non-profits, hospitals, and stakeholders, including First 5 Kern, Kern Family Health Care, Kern County Fire Department, Bakersfield City Fire Department, Dignity Health Mercy & Memorial Hospitals, Adventist Health Bakersfield, Kern Medical, Delano Regional Medical Center, Bakersfield Pregnancy Center, and Kern County Public Health.

We hope that you can assist us again this year in our efforts to educate our community about this important option for any woman and her baby in a crisis.

Don't abandon your baby. Safely surrender your baby into the hands of any fire station or emergency room personnel. It's safe, legal, and no one has to know.

For media arrangements, please contact Heidi Carter-Escudero at (661) 633-7104 or by cell at (661) 203-2653.

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