



February 1, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February is Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness Month in Kern County

(Bakersfield, CA) –On February 7, 2023, the Kern County Board of Supervisors will proclaim February, Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness Month in Kern County. Additionally, the Safely Surrendered Baby Coalition is holding a Press Conference, airing our new PSA in movie theaters, sharing a social media campaign and presenting throughout Kern County in collaborative meetings and proclamations.

95 babies have been safely surrendered in Kern County since we began tracking those babies in 2006, including five in 2021.

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.

We invite you to join us for our **Press Conference**, on Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. in front of Kern Medical Hospital, located at 1700 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Bakersfield, CA.

Our February campaign also includes social media and a movie theater PSA. Join us by following along on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook @kerncountydhs for information and education about the Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

Throughout Kern County, a newborn baby (up to three days old) can be safely surrendered into the hands of any hospital emergency room or Fire Station personnel. 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 group of dedicated individuals representing a long list of agencies, non-profits, hospitals, and stakeholders, including First 5 Kern, Kern Family Health Care, Kern Medical Hospital, Clinica Sierra Vista, Koinonia Family Services, Kern County Network for Children, Kern County Fire Department, Kern County Public Health, Bakersfield City Fire Department, Adventist Health Hospitals – Bakersfield, Delano and Tehachapi, Dignity Health Mercy & Memorial Hospitals, Bakersfield Pregnancy Center, Kern County Right to Life, and Ridgecrest Regional Hospital.

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 hospital emergency room personnel. It's safe, legal, and no one has to know.

For media arrangements, please contact Jana Slagle at 661.342.8054.

