

Safety in the NICU

Susan Hepworth, Mitchell Goldstein, MD, MBA, CML



The National Coalition for Infant Health is a collaborative of more than 200 professional, clinical, community health, and family support organizations focused on improving the lives of premature infants through age two and their families. NCfIH's mission is to promote lifelong clinical, health, education, and supportive services needed by premature infants and their families. NCfIH prioritizes safety of this vulnerable population and access to approved therapies.

This past August, the coalition released *Safety in the NICU*. The video emphasizes the ways in which infants do not always receive the health care they need due to current policies and systemic issues, and demonstrates how these problems can start to be fixed.

The text from the video follows. Please feel free to share it with your networks.

Sometimes the healthcare system treats infants like they are tiny adults, and it's not just inaccurate—it can actually cause problems, especially when it comes to medications and medical devices used to treat infants in hospitals.

“Infants need healthcare that’s tailored to their age, weight, and medical condition; but, that’s not always what they receive. Instead, they may be treated with devices and medications that were designed for adults, not for babies.”

Caring for babies in the hospital often involves ventilators for breathing support, monitors to track vital signs and lung function, incubators to normalize babies' temperatures, and infusion pumps and tubing to deliver medication or nutrition. Accuracy and precision are critical, whether it's fragile infants fighting for their lives in the NICU, or older babies receiving care elsewhere in the hospital.

Infants need healthcare that's tailored to their age, weight, and medical condition; but, that's not always what they receive. Instead, they may be treated with devices and medications that were designed for adults, not for babies. That can lead to errors, such as unintentional medication overdoses, dangerously high



SAFETY = Devices & Medications Specifically Developed For Infants

NCfIH National Coalition
for Infant Health
Protecting Access for Premature Infants through Age Two

oxygen levels, and variable blood sugar levels. These errors can lead to further illness, injury, or even death.

Disclosures: The authors have no disclosures

“Infants deserve protection and the safest possible health care. That requires policies that promote the development of drugs and devices for infants under 2, and hospital systems that implement the use of these drugs and devices.”

Infants deserve protection and the safest possible health care. That requires policies that promote the development of drugs and devices for infants under 2, and hospital systems that implement the use of these drugs and devices. With more tools designed specifically for tiny patients, more babies can receive the best hospital care.

References:

1. National Coalition for Infant Health; Available from: <https://www.infanthealth.org/prematurity>

NT

National Coalition for Infant Health Values (SANE)

Safety. Premature infants are born vulnerable. Products, treatments and related public policies should prioritize these fragile infants' safety.

Access. Budget-driven health care policies should not preclude premature infants' access to preventative or necessary therapies.

Nutrition. Proper nutrition and full access to health care keep premature infants healthy after discharge from the NICU.

Equality. Prematurity and related vulnerabilities disproportionately impact minority and economically disadvantaged families. Restrictions on care and treatment should not worsen inherent disparities.

NEONATOLOGY TODAY is interested in publishing manuscripts from Neonatologists, Fellows, NNPs and those involved in caring for neonates on case studies, research results, hospital news, meeting announcements, and other pertinent topics.

Please submit your manuscript to: LomaLindaPublishingCompany@gmail.com



Susan Hepworth
Director
National Coalition for Infant Health
2020 K Street NW
Suite 505
Washington, DC 20006
Email: info@infanthealth.org



Mitchell Goldstein, MD, MBA, CML
Professor of Pediatrics
Loma Linda University School of Medicine
Division of Neonatology
Department of Pediatrics
Email: mgoldstein@llu.edu



New subscribers are always welcome!

NEONATOLOGY TODAY

**To sign up for a free monthly subscription,
just click on this box to go directly to our
subscription page**