

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Wednesday, 12 June 2019

PREVENTING THE HEARTBREAK OF STILLBIRTHS

The Andrews Labor Government is leading the most significant effort in Victoria's history to reduce preventable stillbirths and save lives.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today launched the Safer Baby Collaborative, which is a ground-breaking new program that sets an ambitious goal of reducing the rate of stillbirths in Victoria by 20 per cent by 2022.

Around 500 babies are stillborn every year in Victoria – a rate which has been largely unchanged in the past 20 years, but still, community awareness of stillbirth risk factors remains low.

And while we may sadly never know why some babies are stillborn, research tells us that some can be prevented.

Partnering with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Safer Care Victoria's Safer Baby Collaborative will provide support and resources to 20 participating maternity services targeting preventable stillbirths from five different angles.

This includes:

- increasing public awareness of the importance of fetal movements
- improving diagnosis and management of fetal growth restriction
- improving rates of smoking cessation in pregnancy
- raising awareness of safe maternal sleep positions
- promoting appropriate timing of birth and mitigating unintended consequences or harm.

The Safer Baby Collaborative builds on Safer Care Victoria's *Movements Matter* campaign launched last October that encourages pregnant women to get to know how their baby's movements, and to immediately speak up if they notice any change.

The social media campaign reached 620,000 people and aimed to dispel common myths for expectant mothers and the doctors, midwives and other people who care for them.

Meanwhile, Safer Care Victoria has run 23 workshops in the past year for more than 700 clinicians to help improve antenatal detection and management of fetal growth restriction.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"Losing a baby to stillbirth is such a heartbreaking and traumatic time for too many hopeful parents."

"Equally tragic is that our stillbirth rate has remained the same for the past two decades. We must do things differently to prevent stillbirths and save lives."

"When we're all working together - we can help prevent stillbirths."

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