



Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department

Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

October 12th, 2023

The Health Department observes Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Month by creating displays to remember the babies who died in Hamilton County

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – This October, the Hamilton County Health Department is observing Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month by honoring all the babies who died before their first birthday in Hamilton County. Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month allows the community to raise awareness about the profound impact of pregnancy and infant loss on families. The observance of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month aims to comfort those who have lost a child through miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth, infant loss, or other complications.

Pregnancy and infant loss affects millions of families worldwide. According to the Tennessee Department of Health, 505 babies died in 2021 throughout Tennessee. Of those 505 deaths, 47 were babies who died before reaching their first birthday in Hamilton County. Each year, tens of thousands of families across the United States are devastated by the death of their baby. Promoting awareness of pregnancy and infant loss increases the likelihood that grieving families will receive understanding and support and results in improved education and prevention efforts, which may ultimately reduce the incidence of these tragedies.

“Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness is a time when we not only bring awareness but acknowledge the babies gone too soon and support grieving families. We empathize and want those who had to experience such a tragedy to know they are not alone and that the Health Department cares. This is a time our community can come together and spread awareness so we can educate families and implement prevention strategies to make our community a healthier and safer place for our babies to be born in,” says Marissa Thompson, Infant Mortality Review & Reduction (IRIS) Program Manager at the Hamilton County Health Department.

The Health Department’s [IRIS program](#) showcases three displays throughout the 3rd Street Health Department honoring the babies lost in Hamilton County. Each exhibit aims to create a safe space for grief conversation, support, and resource information. The 3rd Street and roundabout entrance feature 47 infant onesies or pinwheels representing the 47 lives of infants lost in 2021. The second-floor breezeway displays “Angel Bears,” where grieving families can honor and remember their late children. If a parent or caregiver wants their child’s name shown on an angel bear, fill out the form by clicking the [link](#). Community members are encouraged to visit the Health Department’s displays to raise awareness of pregnancy and infant loss within the community.

On Sunday, October 15, all bereaved families and community members worldwide are encouraged to light a candle at 7 p.m. for Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. Candles can be picked up from the Health Department’s 3rd Street location before Friday, October 13th, between 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. The candle lighting can be done from wherever you are and is meant to call attention to how the community supports bereaved mothers, fathers, and family members and honor the courage of families who have lost a child. Together, Hamilton County can honor all the babies who left this world too soon and work to prevent future baby deaths.

Additional resources

- Questions? Call the Health Department Hotline at 423-209-8383.
- For Health Department information, visit: Health.HamiltonTN.gov
- To read this information in Spanish, visit the Health Department’s Spanish Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN>

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