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Halifax Regional Giving Safe Sleep Onesies in November N.C. Healthy Start Foundation Partners with Medical Center

November 23, 2009 (Raleigh, NC) –Halifax Regional and the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation will partner to give onesies (baby garments) to every baby born in Halifax Regional this month. Each onesie has an attractive, but clear, safe sleep message “Stomach to Play, Back to Sleep, For Baby’s Safe Sleep.”

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is one of the leading causes of infant death. In 2008, the number of infant deaths related to SIDS increased in North Carolina, accounting for 136 deaths in children under 1 year of age. In addition to SIDS deaths, many babies die from accidental suffocation and strangulation. Many of these preventable deaths are related to excess bedding and parents sleeping with their babies, according to the North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

To help teach parents about the safest ways for their babies to sleep, the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation (NCHSF), which coordinates the NC Back to Sleep campaign in collaboration with the NC Division of Public Health, has sent 75 onesies to Halifax Regional for November births. A bilingual (Spanish/English) fact sheet with tips for safe sleep and additional educational materials will also be provided.

Safe sleep tips for new parents include:

- Put your baby on his/her back to sleep for naps and at night
- Use a firm mattress for baby’s crib
- Keep pillows, comforters and soft blankets, stuffed animals and toys out of the crib
- Baby should sleep in his or her own crib
- Do not let anyone smoke near your baby
- Breastfeed your baby
- Keep baby and the room temperature comfortable (68° - 75°F) – not too hot

At Halifax Regional, April Clay, RNC and Cynthia Eaton, RN arranged for the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation to receive the onesies. Marta Pirzadeh, with NCHSF, coordinates the Infant Safe Sleep campaign.

“There are many things that parents can do to help reduce the risks of SIDS and prevent infant sleep related deaths. Hospital staff are provided many opportunities to educate new parents and model safe sleep behaviors,” says Pirzadeh. “We are thrilled that new parents will leave Halifax Regional with information to help their babies sleep safely once they get home.”

About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.us.

The North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation is collaborating with hospitals across the state to distribute onesies. A total of more than 6,000 babies are expected to leave hospitals with the onesies. Infant safe sleep trainings will also be held to educate staff in some of the hospitals. For more information about baby’s safe sleep, visit www.NCHealthyStart.org or call 919.828.1819.

Partial funding for this project was provided by the CJ Foundation for SIDS. Recognized as one of the largest, leading SIDS organizations in the country, the CJ Foundation has provided funding for hospital outreach in North Carolina for three years. For more information on the CJ Foundation for SIDS, visit www.cjsids.org.