



# MEDIA ADVISORY

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
140 Dameron Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917-6413

## **KCHD to present local Strong Baby 'stars'** *Public health campaign aimed at improving birth outcomes*

**Who:** Knox County Health Department (KCHD)

**What:** Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett and KCHD Director Dr. Martha Buchanan will kick off the 2017 Strong Baby campaign that will, for the first time, feature babies from East Tennessee.

**When:** Monday, May 15 at 2 p.m.

**Where:** The MUSE Knoxville, 516 N. Beaman St.

### **Background:**

The Strong Baby project uses lighthearted and attention-grabbing images of stronger-than-average babies to educate the community about the importance of early and adequate prenatal care, breastfeeding, nutrition, safe sleep, avoiding tobacco, and other healthy behaviors that can help improve birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality.

KCHD launched its Strong Baby project in May 2016 using images of babies from a highly-successful campaign conducted by the City of Milwaukee Health Department. KCHD held a casting call in October 2016 in search of local 'stars' for its campaign. The selected babies were announced last November. The May 15 event will reveal the images of eight local babies performing the incredible, physical feats for which the campaign is known.



While not all pregnancy complications can be prevented, women can increase their chances of having a healthy baby by managing health conditions and detecting problems early. Infant mortality, defined as the death of an infant before his or her first birthday, is higher for those born to mothers who receive inadequate prenatal care, and in 2013 only 70 percent of women in Knox County received early, adequate prenatal care. Babies born just a few weeks early have higher rates of hospitalization and illness versus full-term infants. In fact, complications of prematurity was the leading cause of infant death in 2014. It's also important for families to continue healthy behaviors after pregnancy, including avoiding tobacco, following the recommended immunization schedule and providing safe sleep environments for their infants. Defined as suffocation, asphyxia, or entrapment related to bedding, toys or co-sleeping, sleep-related infant deaths in Tennessee increased by 43 percent between 2014 (99 deaths) and 2015 (142 deaths).

The Strong Baby project is an outcome of our Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) program, which is funded by the Tennessee Department of Health. FIMR is an action-oriented community process that continually assesses, monitors and works to improve service systems and community resources for women, infants and families.

For more information, contact Katharine Killen at 865-215-5534 (office) or 865-755-1121 (cell).

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