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Three Lee Health Hospitals Earn Highest Marks for Safe Infant Sleep

Cape Coral Hospital, Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida, HealthPark Medical Center among 10 in Florida with Gold Certification.

(Fort Myers, Fla. – August 5, 2019) --- Southwest Florida parents can rest easy knowing their infants are sleeping well at three Lee Health Certified Safe Sleep Champion hospitals.

Cape Coral Hospital, Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida and HealthPark Medical Center recently earned the highest possible gold-level certification from the National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification Program for their commitment to best practices and education on infant safe sleep. The hospitals are three of ten in Florida to earn gold certification.

"Nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our pediatric patients and this certification reinforces our commitment to creating a zero harm environment in our hospitals," said Scott Kashman, chief officer, hospital operations at Lee Health.

The National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification Program is a national program created by Cribs for Kids®, a Pittsburgh-based organization dedicated to preventing infant, sleep-related deaths due to accidental suffocation. More than 3,500 infants are lost to sleep-related deaths in the U.S. each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Unsafe sleep practices are the leading cause of preventable death for infants in Southwest Florida and, unfortunately, that number is on the rise," said Susan Ryckman, vice president of operations chief nurse executive at Golisano Children's Hospital. "One of our goals is to educate new parents about safe sleep practices before they leave the hospital so they can create the best possible environment for their newborns."

An unsafe sleep environment can be created when babies share their beds with either another person or with excess blankets or toys. Suffocation occurs when a baby isn't able to breathe because it's lying in a position where something is blocking the baby's airflow. This can be caused by an adult or child rolling over onto the baby. It can also occur if something soft, such a blanket, pillow, sheet or the mattress itself blocks the baby's airway.

A simple way to prevent this is to follow the ABC method for creating a safe sleep environment. These stand for:

- A – Alone. Infants should always sleep alone. Have baby share your room, not your bed.
- B – On their Back. Place your baby on his or her back for all sleep times – naps and at night
- C – In a Crib. Use a firm sleep surface, such as a mattress in a safety-approved crib.

For more information on the National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification program visit

<http://www.cribsforkids.org/safesleephospitalcertification>

About Lee Health

Since the opening of the first hospital in 1916, Lee Health has been a health care leader in Southwest Florida, constantly evolving to meet the needs of the community. A non-profit, integrated health care services organization, Lee Health is committed to the well-being of every individual served, focused on healthy living and maintaining good health. Staffed by caring people, inspiring health, services are conveniently located throughout the community in four acute care hospitals, two specialty hospitals, outpatient centers, walk-in medical centers, primary care and specialty physician practices and other services across the continuum of care. Formerly known as Lee Memorial Health System, the organization began its second century of service with a new name in 2016. Learn more at www.LeeHealth.org.