Nurses, Firemen and Newborns: A Successful Collaboration

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Background

- Approximately 25,000 babies are delivered outside of hospitals each year in the United States
- 7-17% of all planned home births require transfer to a hospital for complications
- Babies born in an uncontrolled environment outside the hospital face issues; asphyxia, birth injuries & hypothermia
- Firemen and paramedics are first responders to infants born unintentionally outside of a hospital
- One case in our community exemplified these issues and more

Upon paramedic arrival, baby found on bathroom floor, apneic and cold. Resuscitation initiated and the infant transported to the emergency department (ED). When the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) team responded to the code in the ED, the baby was still not breathing and extremely cold.

Resuscitation was successful and the baby was admitted to the NICU, where he remained critical for several days. Once the infant stabilized, severe neurological deficits were evident

Objectives

After viewing this poster, the participant will be able to:

1. Explain how serious the risks are to babies born in an uncontrolled environment and the need for outreach and education
2. Describe the outcomes from the collaboration between acute care RNs and a community fire department
3. Discuss the leadership role of the NICU RN in a performance improvement project through community outreach

Purpose

The aim of this performance improvement project was to educate firemen and paramedics in our community and to improve outcomes of newborns born outside the hospital at risk for life threatening complications

Project

Education Program

Issue identified
Pre-hospital infant stabilization
Opportunity to collaborate with first responders
Follow up for first responders
Identifying areas for improvement

Project Team:
NICU RN Leaders
Pre-Hospital Coordinator
Fire Department Educator
Firemen and Paramedics

Target Audience
Paramedics and Firemen

Educational Content

Case Review
Risk Factors
Environment
Newborn Resuscitation
Post Delivery Care
Respiratory Care
Thermoregulation
Transport
Emotional Support

Outcomes

Several months later, an infant was born outside when it was an unusually cold night and the temperature was 34 degrees. Paramedics responded and used their new knowledge to successfully resuscitate, stabilize and warm the infant prior to transport to the ED

Conclusion

Chemical mattress are now stocked on all rescue vehicles. This infant stabilization program is incorporated into fire department education.

The program has been provided to multiple cities and county fire departments.

All cases like these are now reviewed with hospital staff and first responders.

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