



# BCHD PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Baltimore City Teens win B'more for Healthy Babies *iHeART Baltimore Creative Arts Competition***

Baltimore, MD (April 18, 2011) – The Baltimore City Health Department is pleased to announce that Tranya Tisdale, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader from Baltimore City College High School, has won the B'more for Healthy Babies *iHeART Baltimore Creative Arts Competition*. Her handmade poster entitled, "A Baby Should Sleep," was selected by a diverse panel of judges. Her poster creatively portrays the ABC's of safe sleep, including depictions of the right and wrong way to place an infant to sleep, clearly indicating that babies should be placed **A**lone, on their **B**acks, and in a **C**rib, No Exceptions.

Tranya is a member of both her High School band and choir, and is also active with her church choir. She hopes to become a pediatrician one day, which explains her interest in the B'more for Healthy Babies teen competition. The competition was aimed at giving teens the creative freedom to express the importance of healthy babies and healthy families, and infant-safe sleep. Safe Sleep practices is the first phase of the B'more for Healthy Babies initiative, aimed at reducing the city's high infant mortality rates.

"I am thrilled that the youth of Baltimore are actively engaged in preventing among the most significant public health problems in the city, infant mortality, says Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot, "Baltimore City Health Department's use of social media to create dialogue around this critical topic has been effective and innovative."

Second and third place was awarded to two other Baltimore City College High School students. Second place was awarded to 9<sup>th</sup> grade student Afri'kiia Robertson for her video, "How it Affects Your Unborn Baby." Zakiya Sewell, a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student, won for her poem, "Too Late." All three winners will receive prizes from Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs. The entries were judged by a panel of arts and health experts from throughout the city.

"The vibrancy and creativity our young artists brought to this very important topic is extremely encouraging. I hope they spread the word about safe sleep to their families and peers," states Cathy Church-Balin, Business Development Director for the Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs and one of the competition's judges.

*iHeART Baltimore* initiative uses social media to integrate health and the creative arts. The goal of *iHeART Baltimore* is to generate community-driven dialogue about health issues. By using the arts as a medium, the Health Department hopes that Baltimore residents will be able to infuse their own discussions with a vibrancy and relevance that is sometimes missing from traditional health communication.

“This was a very exciting way to use an original idea and inform people of my community, especially younger or teen mothers about the safety of their babies. I am really glad that I was given the opportunity to express my opinion on the safety of babies and toddlers in their sleeping environments. It is wonderful that I got through to someone and they appreciated it,” states Tranya.

Photos of all 36 submissions can be viewed on the BCHD Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/baltimorehealth](http://www.facebook.com/baltimorehealth), and on the B'more for Healthy Babies website, [www.healthybabiesbaltimore.com](http://www.healthybabiesbaltimore.com). Information about upcoming *iHeART Baltimore* contests will also be posted on our Website, [www.baltimorehealth.org/iheartbaltimore](http://www.baltimorehealth.org/iheartbaltimore).

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