

News Release

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BC Hosts Second Shaken Baby Syndrome Symposium

VANCOUVER – British Columbia is taking the lead in providing vital information about Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) at a symposium held in Vancouver today. The second provincial SBS symposium brings four internationally respected experts together to update participants on the latest medical information, research, and prevention initiatives with a focus on the present situation in B.C.

“Shaken Baby Syndrome is always serious, often resulting in life-long consequences,” said Linda Reid, Minister of State for Child Care. “The Ministry is pleased to be one of the sponsors of this event, and I am sure we will all learn from the panel of internationally respected experts presenting here today.”

Shaken Baby Syndrome is the leading cause of non-accidental death in infants and the most common cause of inflicted brain injury in the first year of a child’s life. Experts educated the audience about the dangerous outcomes of this type of head injury, important recent research, and what is being done now in B.C. to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome.

A major theme of this year’s symposium was the empirical correlation between crying and SBS. According to Dr. Ron Barr, Director of the Centre for Community Child Health Research at BC Children’s and one of four expert speakers at the symposium, this relationship must be reflected in prevention programs in order for them to succeed.

“One of the key things that has become evident is that the advice about crying given in popular parenting magazines and books is off the mark. We need to shift away from the old idea that having a baby who is an excessive crier means there is something wrong with your parenting skills or with your baby. We now know that it is normal for all babies to have a higher crying pattern in the first five months of life, and some can cry as much as five hours a day and still be normal.”

"Because excessive crying is the number one trigger for Shaken Baby Syndrome, any successful prevention program must help parents to be prepared for that period of more than usual crying" says Dr. Barr.

This was the symposium's second year in Vancouver and drew more than 130 professionals from health care, social work, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Health, law enforcement, and child development programs from throughout the province.

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