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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, UAMS, AND COUNT THE KICKS PARTNER TO LAUNCH STILLBIRTH PREVENTION CAMPAIGN THROUGHOUT ARKANSAS

Goal to Save 86 Babies Every Year¹

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas – (January 17, 2023) – The Arkansas [Department of Health](#) and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences ([UAMS](#)) are partnering with *Count the Kicks*, an evidence-based stillbirth prevention campaign, to educate expectant parents in Arkansas about the importance of tracking a baby's movements daily in the third trimester of pregnancy.

Stillbirth is a national public health crisis that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. For Arkansas families, 1 in every 138 pregnancies end in stillbirth,² and families in the state are 10 times more likely to lose a baby to stillbirth than to SIDS. [Recent data](#) shows the devastating impact of COVID-19 on placentas and babies. Doctors have discovered what they are calling SARS-CoV-2 placentitis, a condition in which the virus attacks the placenta and cuts off oxygen to the baby.³

In the U.S. the annual number of stillbirths (defined as the loss of a baby at 20 weeks or greater during pregnancy) far exceeds the number of deaths among children aged 0-14 years from

¹ Number based on 5-year average stillbirth rate, multiplied by the 32% reduction seen in Iowa. Stillbirth data is from CDC Wonder. Note stillbirth rate is calculated by: Fetal Deaths/Total of Live Births + Fetal Deaths*1,000.

² Number based on dividing 1,000 by the 5-year average stillbirth rate. Stillbirth data is from CDC Wonder.

³ Linehan L, O'Donoghue K, Dineen S, White J, Higgins JR, Fitzgerald B. SARS-CoV-2 placentitis: An uncommon complication of maternal COVID-19. *Placenta*. 2021 Jan 15;104:261-266. doi: 10.1016/j.placenta.2021.01.012. Epub 2021 Jan 11. PMID: 33465727; PMCID: PMC7832228.



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preterm birth, SIDS, accidents, drownings, guns, fire and flu combined. Research shows that nearly 30% of stillbirths can be prevented when expectant parents are educated on the importance of tracking their baby's movements daily starting at 28 weeks.

Research shows a change in a baby's movements in the third trimester is an early red flag. By using *Count the Kicks*, expectant parents can increase the chances of their baby arriving safely. *Count the Kicks* has a free app available in the iOS and Google Play app stores that provides expectant parents a simple, noninvasive way to monitor their babies' well-being every day. After a few days using the app, expectant parents begin to see a pattern, a normal amount of time it takes their baby to get to 10 movements. If their baby's "normal" changes during the third trimester, this could be a sign of potential problems and is an indication that the expectant parent should call her health care provider.

Fort Smith mom Elaina Murry knows first-hand the importance of paying attention to her baby's movements. She was using the *Count the Kicks* app, and about a month before her due date, Murry noticed Zelda's movements change significantly. Murry mentioned it to her health care provider, and after further testing, they made the decision to deliver Zelda early.

"Even though her nonstress test had looked OK, her decreased movements were a harbinger of fetal distress. She was found to have her umbilical cord wrapped tightly around her neck two times, which was preventing her from turning out of breech position and would have likely led to significant complications had we delayed the delivery much longer," Murry said. After delivery, Murry's providers discovered an issue with her placenta that also was contributing to Zelda's distress. "Using the *Count the Kicks* app was definitely a good choice. The app was an important part of my final days of pregnancy and contributed to the overall picture of needing to deliver her early for both her health and mine."

Thanks to the partnership with ADH and UAMS, maternal health providers, birthing hospitals, home visitors, social service agencies, childbirth educators and other providers in Arkansas can order FREE *Count the Kicks* educational materials (available at www.CountTheKicks.org) to help them have the kick counting conversation with expectant parents. These materials include posters, brochures, and app download cards in English and Spanish.

"The Arkansas Department of Health is committed to improving birth outcomes for families in our state, and we believe *Count the Kicks* provides a solution to help save babies now. We encourage anyone who works with expectant parents to order free *Count the Kicks* educational materials to share with the communities you serve. Together we can help more families in our state have a healthy birth outcome," said William Greenfield, MD, MBA, FACOG, medical director for family health at the Arkansas Department of Health and a professor in the UAMS Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

"We are very excited to partner with the Department of Health and Count the Kicks to bring this program to Arkansas moms," said Nirvana Manning, MD, NCMP, FACOG, UAMS Director for the Women and Infant's Health Service Line at UAMS. "The smartphone app is very easy to use, and it provides tremendous peace of mind knowing that your baby is healthy in the final



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weeks of pregnancy. We hope to bring similar results to Arkansas like they've experienced in Iowa and reduce the number of stillbirths in our state.”

According to CDC Wonder, approximately 268 Arkansas babies are stillborn each year.⁴ In Iowa, where *Count the Kicks* began, the state's stillbirth rate dropped by nearly 32% in the first 10 years of the campaign (2008-2018). Iowa's rate went from 33rd worst in the country to one of the lowest, while the country's stillbirth rate remained relatively flat. Through this collaboration, ADH is hoping to bring the same success to Arkansas, which would save approximately 86 babies in the state each year.⁵

CDC data shows that every year in the U.S., approximately 700 women will die from childbirth complications, and 22,300 babies will be stillborn. The risk is even greater for Black women who, according to the CDC, are twice as likely to lose a baby to stillbirth than their white neighbor, colleague or friend. Black women are also three times more likely to die of pregnancy complications. For Black women in the U.S., 1 in every 97 pregnancies ends in stillbirth.

To learn more about this partnership, please join a free webinar at 12 p.m. CST on Feb. 2. To register for this free event visit bit.ly/ArkansasCTK. Continuing Education will be available.

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About UAMS

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,240 students, 913 medical residents and fellows, and five dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 11,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

⁴ Number based on the 5-year average stillbirth numbers, total stillbirth data from CDC Wonder.

⁵ Number based on 5-year average stillbirth rate, multiplied by the 32% reduction seen in Iowa. Stillbirth data is from CDC Wonder. Note stillbirth rate is calculated by: Fetal Deaths/Total of Live Births + Fetal Deaths*1,000.



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the KICKS

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About *Count the Kicks*

The *Count the Kicks* public health campaign is a project of *Healthy Birth Day, Inc.*, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the prevention of stillbirth. *Count the Kicks* has a growing network of supportive doctors, nurses, hospitals and clinics in 22 states that give *Count the Kicks* materials to their patients. *Count the Kicks* has been featured on Good Morning America, The Washington Post, Sunday Night Football, and in O Magazine, and produced a national PSA that has generated more than 300 million viewer impressions. *Count the Kicks* has more than 110 stories from families around the country who have written in to share how they used *Count the Kicks* to help their baby have a healthy birth day. The free *Count the Kicks* app, which is available in 16 languages, has been downloaded more than 200,000 times in all 50 states and more than 140 countries. Learn more about our vision to save 7,500 babies every year and improve birth outcomes everywhere at CountTheKicks.org.