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ASTM Moves Closer to Developing Standard for Baby Slings

The Baby Carrier Industry Alliance (BCIA) today applauded the efforts of all stakeholders involved in the three year effort that brought the first voluntary safety standard for sling-style carriers to ballot last month. When finalized later this year, the standard will join those for cribs, strollers, hand-held infant carriers (car seats), bouncer seats, play yards and other durable nursery products as an effective way to provide the public with safer products.

The standards process, initiated by a group of sling manufacturers comprised of BCIA members, is administered by ASTM International, one of the largest voluntary standards development organizations in the world. In addition to BCIA, other stakeholders involved in the standards process include the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Health Canada, Juvenile Products Manufacturing Association (JPMA), consumer groups (including Consumers Union, Kids in Danger and Consumer Federation of America), testing labs, retailers and manufacturers.

The new sling carrier standard will provide manufacturers with expert engineering and human factors guidance on how to design safer products based on industry best practices. In addition, it will offer recommendations on instructions and warnings for the safe use of sling carriers.

"We are extremely proud to participate in this standards development process," said BCIA Executive Director Vesta Garcia. "The final standard will help consumers have confidence that the carriers they buy are well designed and well made products. We acknowledge the great cooperation that the standards committee received from CPSC staff, whose input has been invaluable in the development of the standard."

"In addition to ensuring that these products are safer, we also want to make certain that consumers learn the importance of safe babywearing," continued Garcia. "BCIA hopes to continue its collaboration with CPSC by developing a joint babywearing safety education program to teach consumers about proper, babywearing techniques. BCIA is currently developing such a program in Canada in conjunction with Health Canada. With the creation of a new standard and CPSC Chairman Inez Tenenbaum's recently announced 'Safe Sleep Initiative,' now is the perfect time to initiate such an education program in the U.S."

"Millions of Americans have embraced babywearing as safe, practical, comfortable and convenient," concluded Garcia. "Both its growing popularity and the awareness of its benefits are due in part to an increased understanding of the baby's and mother's biological need to be together. Studies have shown that, for mothers, babywearing facilitates the initiation and ease of breastfeeding and can help moms form stronger bonds with their babies. Babywearing also helps mothers care for themselves and for their babies during the newborn stage."

BCIA reminds parents and caregivers that the practice of babywearing keeps babies in the safest place possible, in a parent's arms with baby's face visible to the carrying adult. For additional information on babywearing safety, please visit the BCIA website at <http://www.babycarrierindustryalliance.org>.

The Baby Carrier Industry Alliance exists to increase awareness of the value of quality baby carriers and to support those in the baby carrier industry. The BCIA was formed in 2010 as a 501(c)(6) corporation. As an alliance of industry leaders, the BCIA is organized to propagate standards across the industry, promote educational outreach, participate in research, and help small businesses comply with standards.

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