

Wright County Health Department Receives Breastfeeding Friendly Award

Wright County Public Health has received a Breastfeeding Friendly Health Department Award from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) for its contributions to the health of mothers and their babies.

The designation acknowledges a county health department's commitment to acting as a model for the community by supporting healthy families and receiving the business benefits of supporting nursing mothers.

The county was recognized at the silver level for working with local public places and child care centers to provide a breastfeeding friendly environment for families.

MDH recognizes county health departments, workplaces, maternity centers and child care facilities that have demonstrated their commitment to supporting breastfeeding mothers.

Breastfeeding is a foundational way to ensure that babies receive optimal nutrition during the first formative years of life. Studies show that infants who are breastfed have better health outcomes as they grow.

"It's important to note that more than families benefit from breastfeeding-friendly environments. Communities that support breastfeeding reap the cost savings of healthy mothers and babies. Employers see a boost in employee morale and fewer absences from illness. By being breastfeeding-friendly we are helping families off to their best start," says Sarah Grosshuesch, Wright County Public Health Director.

Awards are designated at gold, silver and bronze levels, which correspond to the number of steps an organization met in a 10-step process. Wright County has completed seven of the ten steps to be recognized at the silver level.

In addition to working with local public places and child care centers, the projects Wright County Public Health undertook to achieve the designation include collecting national, state and local breastfeeding data to assess the need for improved breastfeeding support in Wright County; starting the Buffalo Baby Café in partnership with Allina-Buffalo Hospital; forming the Wright County Breastfeeding Coalition, who partnered to create the Wright County Breastfeeding Resource List; and improving support internally for breastfeeding employees.

MDH's Breastfeeding Friendly recognition program is supported by the state Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) and the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP).

To learn more about the application process for the Breastfeeding Friendly recognition program, visit www.health.state.mn.us/breastfeedingfriendly.

