

February 21, 2014

Grand River Hospital celebrates renewed designation as a WHO/UNICEF baby friendly hospital

Grand River Hospital is celebrating its successful re-designation as a Baby-Friendly Hospital, recognizing its key role in a healthy start for Waterloo Region families.

The World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada award the designation to organizations that promote and protect breastfeeding by meeting the Ten Steps for Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI).

"My sincere congratulations to Grand River Hospital on renewing its UNICEF and World Health Organization designation as a baby friendly hospital. This prestigious designation means more babies in the Waterloo Region will continue benefiting from breastfeeding and have a healthier start to life," said Deb Matthews, Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

"Breastfeeding promotes closer bonds between mom and baby, helps protect against illness, and sets babies on the path to leading healthy lives right from the start. That's why, as part of our Healthy Kids Strategy, our government is helping moms to breastfeed with round-the-clock telephone support and expert help from hospitals and community health providers."

"Thanks to an effort involving many years and an enormous staff commitment, we became the first southwest Ontario hospital and the third in the province to receive our designation back in 2008," said Karin Olson, GRH's vice president of clinical services and chief nursing executive. "Our work in this promotes the health of our community's children and families, and we're using the best research and evidence to support infant feeding and bonding."

A Breastfeeding Committee for Canada assessment team appraises hospitals for the designation. The committee reviews and assesses several components including the implementation of standardized breastfeeding policies; education of all hospital staff, physicians, patients and families about the benefits of breastfeeding; and the establishment of a multi-disciplinary Baby-Friendly committee.

Grand River Hospital has put in place many practices that help mothers to meet their infant feeding goals. Some of these include:

- Keeping moms and babies together – anywhere, anytime;
- Offering breastfeeding peer group sessions twice daily;
- Providing support and education through on-site lactation consultants; and
- Promoting skin-to-skin contact for all infants

"Grand River Hospital's re-designation as a baby friendly hospital, by WHO and UNICEF, is great news for our community. It means healthier babies in Kitchener-Waterloo, and is a direct result of the hard work of staff at this state-of-the-art hospital," said John Milloy, MPP for Kitchener Centre. "It's so important that young parents receive the education and support they need as they start a new family."

2...

“This re-designation demonstrates the strong commitment of staff, physicians, midwives and leadership to support and improve our community’s health,” explains Irene Harder, director for GRH’s childbirth and children’s programs. “By providing all women with the education and support they need to make an informed choice in regards to their infant’s nutrition, local families can be assured that they are making the best decision for their babies’ healthy start in life.”

Breast milk is the perfect food to promote baby’s healthy growth. It is readily available and promotes mom and baby bonding. The BFI not only promotes a healthy start for babies, but includes longer-term health benefits.

Research shows that breastfeeding can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, and breast and ovarian cancers for moms. Breastfeeding is also linked with reducing incidents of chronic and other illnesses for children and will decrease health care costs over time.

For more information, please contact:

Cheryl Evans, Communications Officer

Office: (519) 749-4300 extension 3899

Cheryl.evans@grhosp.on.ca

www.grhosp.on.ca | Twitter @GRHospitalKW | Youtube: griverhosp