Central Michigan
District Health Department
Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

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PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

To: Local Media

From: Central Michigan District Health Department

RE: National Breastfeeding Month 2020

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National Breastfeeding Month 2020 — Support Changes Everything!

August is National Breastfeeding Month and Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) joins with the Michigan Women, Infant and Children's (WIC) program to celebrate this year's theme of "Support Changes Everything!" WIC breastfeeding peer counselors, breastfeeding coalitions, and other breastfeeding supporters routinely help families reach their breastfeeding goals. However, because of challenges, such as racial disparities, not all families have equal access to support and education.

People of color are more likely to live in under-resourced neighborhoods. According to Micia Eddins-Smith, IBCLC, who works as a breastfeeding coordinator for the Detroit WIC program: "We need to educate dads, grandmothers, and other family members and friends, in addition to mothers. We need to provide anticipatory guidance, such as information about how COVID-19 impacts breastfeeding. We need to individualize education according to the community we are serving, and we need to meet people where they are at, such as by providing flexible hours to connect."

Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed infants. Evidence shows breastfeeding provides many short- and long-term maternal and infant health benefits, as well as economic and community benefits. At CMDHD we have a WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor in each office to be there every step of the way to make breastfeeding easier. A peer counselor is a WIC mother just like you. She lives in your community and has breastfed her own baby. She is here to give you support to meet your own goals for feeding your baby.

The Michigan WIC breastfeeding program is guided by the vision that all families should breastfeed for as long as they choose. CMDHD helps families by removing barriers, advancing equity, and promoting breastfeeding as crucial for infant nutrition, social emotional health, and chronic disease prevention. WIC provides breastfeeding support to all mothers, not just those that are enrolled in WIC.

WIC is there to help in every county in Michigan. Call 211 to find a WIC agency near you. Michigan WIC has a breastfeeding warmline available seven days a week, from 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., at 833-MIWICBF (833-649-4233). Find other local supporters and resources at the Michigan Breastfeeding Network at https://www.mibreastfeeding.org/coalition/

Breastfeeding is a journey. There are ups and downs and feelings of accomplishment and frustration. Every mom's journey is different, but WIC is there every step of the way to make breastfeeding easier. Peer counselors are available to help you in this journey.

What does a Peer Counselor Do?

- Promotes breastfeeding and helps you make an informed decision about feeding your baby.
- Contacts you to build confidence and support your breastfeeding goals.
- Responds to breastfeeding questions or concerns you might have.
- Refers you to WIC breastfeeding experts for more help.

How can a Peer Counselor help you?

Your WIC peer counselor can give you:

- Ways to get a good start while breastfeeding.
- Tips for making plenty of breast milk for your baby.
- Help with breastfeeding concerns.
- Ideas for getting support from your family and friends.
- Ways you can stay close to your baby through breastfeeding after you return to work or school.
- Tips for how to breastfeed comfortable and discreetly, even in public.

WIC provides breastfeeding support to all mothers, not just those that are enrolled in WIC. To find out more or connect with a WIC peer counselor contact your local health department today.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org, LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @CMiDHD.

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