Oklahoma Hospitals Work to Be Designated Baby-Friendly

More than 38,000 Oklahoma infants start out breastfeeding each year in the hospital, but within eight weeks almost 27,000 have stopped, according to data from the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH). To reverse this trend and improve infant health, Oklahoma hospitals are taking on the challenge of becoming designated as “baby-friendly” hospitals. This is a World Health Organization designation which ensures promotion and support of breastfeeding in the hospital and beyond. Only seven percent of U.S. babies are born in baby-friendly hospitals, and currently no Oklahoma babies have this opportunity.

Hospitals that are designated as baby-friendly have demonstrated best practice in the care of mothers and newborns and improved breastfeeding rates. In addition, baby-friendly hospitals support mother-baby bonding by keeping mothers and babies together, putting babies in skin-to-skin contact right after birth, educating all families on best infant feeding practices, and educating hospital staff on procedures to better support new families.

“We are excited about this project, which is supported by the OSDH and partner agencies including the Oklahoma Hospital Association, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, the University of Oklahoma (OU) Health Sciences Center, and the OU Office of Perinatal Quality Improvement,” said Becky Mannel, baby-friendly project lead. Mannel is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant and clinical instructor, and has been leading OU Medical Center hospitals on their journey to reach the baby-friendly status. “Oklahoma has an opportunity to be in the forefront of our region, promoting the best care for babies and families as we provide support for birthing hospitals in achieving the baby-friendly designation.”

On March 1, 2013, a statewide Baby-Friendly Summit will be held on the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center campus in Oklahoma City to educate hospital leaders about becoming baby-friendly. Already nine hospitals are pursuing “baby-friendly” designation including the following:

- Chickasaw Nation Medical Center, Ada
- Claremore Indian Hospital, Claremore
- Comanche County Memorial Hospital, Lawton
- Hillcrest Medical Center, Tulsa
- INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center, Oklahoma City
- INTEGRIS Health Edmond, Edmond
- The Children’s Hospital at OU Medical Center, Oklahoma City
- OU Medical Center, Edmond
- St. Anthony Hospital, Oklahoma City

(More)
“Oklahoma’s hospitals continue to demonstrate their commitment to improved health outcomes by striving for the ‘baby-friendly’ designation. These efforts will undoubtedly lead to improved health for mothers and their babies and will help to reduce infant mortality in our state,” said State Health Commissioner Dr. Terry Cline.

“Our intent is to enroll 10 birthing hospitals every year in Oklahoma until all are participating. Breastfeeding success should not have to depend on where a baby was born,” Mannel said. “We appreciate those hospitals that have taken the lead by participating in the first group working to become designated as baby-friendly.”

Hospitals will be recruited each year with the long-term goal of having every Oklahoman born in a baby-friendly birthing hospital. As part of the “Preparing for a Lifetime, It’s Everyone’s Responsibility” initiative to reduce infant mortality, the OSDH Maternal and Child Health Service is providing state funded training and stipends for birthing hospitals for levels of accomplishment, until the end goal of becoming designated as a baby-friendly hospital is achieved.

Low breastfeeding rates contribute to Oklahoma’s high rates of obesity, diabetes, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in infants, and to increased risks of breast cancer and heart disease in women. In addition, breastfeeding can save families thousands of dollars in costs of baby formula and medical care by decreasing the number of doctor visits, infections, hospitalizations, and missed days from work, while improving the babies’ immune systems so they can better fight against acute and chronic diseases.

For more information about the baby-friendly project or future training opportunities, contact Becky Mannel, project lead, at rebecca-mannel@ouhsc.edu. For more information about breastfeeding and having healthy babies, visit Oklahoma’s Preparing for a Lifetime, It’s Everyone’s Responsibility initiative at http://iio.health.ok.gov.

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Hillcrest Recognized for Being Breastfeeding Friendly

Updated 02-21-2013

Hillcrest Medical Center was recently recognized by the Oklahoma State Department of Health as a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite – Gold Star employer. Hillcrest is the only Tulsa hospital to earn this designation.

To be named a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite – Gold Star employer, Hillcrest was evaluated for a facility-wide policy to support breast pumping employees, access to a comfortable location for pumping, a hospital-grade breast pump available for employees, access to a sink, access to a refrigerator and prenatal breastfeeding education. Hillcrest also offers counseling from a lactation consultant, if needed.

In addition to creating a unique bond, breastfeeding has a positive impact on the lifelong health of both mother and baby.

Breast milk is easier to digest than formula and is loaded with essential nutrients to improve baby's immediate health. Breastfed babies are also less likely to face obesity, asthma and respiratory illnesses as they grow older. Research also suggests that breastfeeding can reduce the risk of Type 1 diabetes, childhood leukemia and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Breastfeeding benefits the mother's health too. Breastfeeding is linked to lower risk of Type 2 diabetes, breast cancer, ovarian cancer and postpartum depression.

“Breastfeeding employees have 24/7 access to a highly-secured, private and comfortable room for pumping milk,” says Cheryl Coleman, a lactation consultant at Hillcrest's Peggy V. Helmerich Women's Health Center. “By offering this dedicated space for our working moms, we give them the opportunity to continue breastfeeding without interruption, even after returning to work full-time. Our employee pump room averages about 150 uses per month.”

Workplaces that have established breastfeeding friendly policies also benefit because breastfeeding may help to mitigate health care costs, lost productivity and absenteeism. Case studies have shown that breastfeeding friendly employers enjoy reduced short-term and long-term absenteeism of new parents, increased retention rates for women of childbearing age and shorter average maternity leaves.

In addition, the Leta M. Chapman Breast Center at Hillcrest Medical Center has been designated a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence (BICOE) by the American College of Radiology (ACR). The Chapman Breast Center at Hillcrest is one of only four breast care centers in Oklahoma to be named a BICOE by the ACR, a designation awarded to less than 10 percent of breast centers nationwide.

By awarding facilities the status of a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence, the ACR recognizes centers that have earned accreditation in all of the college’s voluntary, breast-imaging accreditation programs and modules, in addition to the mandatory Mammography Accreditation Program.

The Leta M. Chapman Breast Center offers Mammapad for a softer digital mammogram, diagnostic technology for detecting even the smallest abnormality, and bone density screenings.

The ACR is headquartered in Reston, Va., and is a national organization serving more than 32,000 diagnostic/interventional radiologists, radiation oncologists, nuclear medicine physicians, and medical
physicists with programs for focusing on the practice of medical imaging and radiation oncology, as well as the delivery of comprehensive health care services.

To learn more about the Oklahoma State Department of Health’s Breastfeeding initiatives, and to see a complete list of breastfeeding friendly worksites, please visit http://bis.health.ok.gov.
Oklahoma medical news briefs
FROM STAFF REPORTS | Published: February 24, 2013

Medical notes

Mobile dental unit unveiled

The Delta Dental of Oklahoma Oral Health Foundation and the Oklahoma Dental Foundation recently announced a partnership program known as MobileSmiles Oklahoma. The program provides for dental clinics on wheels to provide low-cost and free dental care. Two mobile dental units will travel throughout Oklahoma on visits organized through a local site partner, such as a nonprofit organization, church, school or agency. Site partners prequalify and schedule prospective patients who may otherwise not have access to dental care. The organization’s website is www.MobileSmilesOK.org. Fifty-six counties in Oklahoma have a shortage of dental health professionals, according to the state Health Department.

Breast-feeding promoted

Several Oklahoma hospitals are working to promote and support best breast-feeding practices so they can win “baby-friendly” designation. More than 38,000 Oklahoma infants start out breast-feeding each year in the hospital, but within eight weeks, almost 27,000 have stopped, according to the state Health Department. To reverse this trend and improve infant health, Oklahoma hospitals are taking on the challenge of becoming designated as baby-friendly hospitals. This is a World Health Organization designation which ensures promotion and support of breast-feeding in the hospital and beyond. Only 7 percent of U.S. babies are born in baby-friendly hospitals; no state hospitals have this designation. Hospitals designated as baby-friendly have demonstrated best practice in the care of mothers and newborns, and improved breast-feeding rates. On March 1, a statewide Baby-Friendly Summit will be on the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center campus to educate hospital leaders about becoming baby-friendly.

From staff
and wire reports
Ban the Bag and Breastfeed

Twenty-three Oklahoma hospitals are participating in an Oklahoma State Department of Health program called "Ban the Bag" and have agreed to stop the practice of sending new mothers home with commercial formula discharge bags.

Hospital promotion of free infant formula samples has long been known to reduce breastfeeding rates. New mothers who have any problems with breastfeeding are more likely to turn to the "free" formula given to them by their hospital than to call someone for help. The "free" formula becomes very costly when it contributes to Oklahoma’s low breastfeeding duration rates.

Low breastfeeding rates are one of the reasons Oklahoma continues to rank in the top 10 nationwide for obesity, diabetes, and infant mortality. Evidence is overwhelming that breastfeeding improves the health of mothers and babies while formula feeding adds a significant cost to families and our state. Oklahoma hospitals are working hard to encourage breastfeeding and provide quality care to breastfeeding families by joining the Ban the Bag project.

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