

HURON PERTH HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 2018



HPHA Planning To Increase Breastfeeding Rates
Consolidation of Breastfeeding Services to Stratford General Hospital Gives New Moms Better Chance for Breastfeeding Success

The Maternal Child Program at the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) has been working to improve breastfeeding rates and access to breastfeeding support for all new moms.

“Breast milk is the best food you can offer your new baby,” says Kerri Hannon, Manager Maternal Child. “It provides all the nutrients needed to help your baby grow and develop. Health Canada along with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend exclusively breastfeeding for the first six months.”

Unfortunately breastfeeding rates for Perth County in 2017-2018 showed a steady decline after new moms left the hospital.

“Rates are at 88% when moms leave the hospital but drop to 56% eight weeks post-discharge and to 28% by the time the baby reaches six months,” adds Hannon. “Our goal here at HPHA is to increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first eight weeks of life and beyond to meet the WHO standard of 75%. At the same time, we anticipate a decrease in the rates of readmission for feeding and adverse outcomes related to breastfeeding difficulty such as neonatal jaundice.”

One way the HPHA hopes to increase breastfeeding rates is by providing new moms with access to a Registered Nurse with Lactation Consultant certification both as an inpatient and for follow-up care once they have been discharged.

“Breastfeeding is natural, but it’s not always easy,” explains Hannon. “Registered Nurses with Lactation Consultant certification help women learn how to latch and position their babies and can help develop a personalized lactation care plan. We are excited to be able to offer this service especially after listening to feedback from our patients regarding some of the frustration they experienced in their breastfeeding journey. We feel that the access to this expertise both in hospital and at clinics, if needed, will be very beneficial.”

In order to provide this valuable service to patients all breastfeeding supports and resources will be consolidated to HPHA’s Stratford General Hospital site, where the Maternal Child program is located. This means an updated schedule for breastfeeding clinics, along with the relocation of the clinic offered at St. Marys Memorial Hospital to Stratford.

Starting December 17, 2018 all Breastfeeding Clinics will be offered at Stratford General Hospital on the Maternal Child Unit on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Consolidation of these services also helps put HPHA on the right track for achieving a Baby-Friendly designation, a classification given by a global program sponsored by WHO and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. The designation is awarded to hospitals that excel in care for feeding infants, skin-to-skin contact and bonding between parent and child.

As always new moms are encouraged to call the Maternal Child Unit at 519-272-8232 or toll-free 1-888-275-1102 extension 8232 any time, day or night, if they have any questions or require support with breastfeeding.

-30



For more information please contact:

Kerri Hannon, Manager Maternal Child

Office: 519-272-8210, ext. 2323

Cell: 519-274-0423

kerri.hannon@hpha.ca