Hospitals Must Meet Ongoing Challenges to Support New Mothers

Improved hospital policies and practices have led to increased breastfeeding among all California mothers. However, the lowest exclusive rates still are found in hospitals serving low-income women of color.7

The number of credentialed staff to support new mothers continues to increase, but access to skilled support remains limited during off-hours and for women who don’t speak English.5,6

Mothers are inundated with conflicting and inaccurate information about breastfeeding. When mothers are unprepared or confused, they may give up on their breastfeeding goals too soon.8

Exclusive Breastfeeding Provides Lifelong Health Advantages

Breastfeeding is a crucial first step in protecting the health of mothers and infants, nourishing infants and building a foundation for a healthy immune system.1

Hospital practices have an enormous impact on infant-feeding success.2-4 Mothers who receive in-hospital support to breastfeed exclusively often continue to do so after discharge.

Hospitals that have instituted Baby-Friendly policies have high rates of breastfeeding, no matter where they are located or what populations they serve.5-6 As more California hospitals have adopted these evidence-based reforms, in-hospital exclusive breastfeeding has increased since 2010 from 56.6% to 66.6%.7

The UC Davis Human Lactation Center used data reported by the California Department of Public Health Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Program to create the following charts showing in-hospital breastfeeding rates.7

Contra Costa County In-Hospital Breastfeeding Rates, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>ANY BREASTFEEDING</th>
<th>EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTRA COSTA REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN MUIR MEDICAL CENTER</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAISER ANTIOCH MEDICAL CENTER</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAISER WALNUT CREEK HOSPITAL</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN RAMON REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUTTER DELTA MEDICAL CENTER</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on page 2
Targeted efforts are needed to maintain momentum toward improving the quality of perinatal care in California hospitals.

Community advocates have worked with local and statewide coalitions to advocate for laws, cooperation, and media coverage, changing public perceptions of breastfeeding and its importance in public health.

Medical organizations and hospitals have worked together to improve hospital practices and overcome barriers to Baby-Friendly status.

State and academic institutions have enhanced training opportunities in an effort to expand both the number and diversity of skilled professionals supporting women in areas of greatest need.

### Contra Costa County Breastfeeding and Hospital Performance

- County average breastfeeding rates:
  - Any – 96.5%  Exclusive – 79.4%
- County ranked 18th in the state for exclusive breastfeeding
- Highest performing hospital in county: Kaiser Walnut Creek Hospital
- One hospital among the 15 highest-scoring in the state: Kaiser Walnut Creek Hospital

### References: