

For Immediate Release

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CDC Report: Breastfeeding Rates Are Up in North Carolina, Hospital Support Improves

Improvements come two years after launch of DHHS initiative

RALEIGH – Two years after the launch of a North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services program aimed at encouraging breastfeeding at hospital maternity centers, a new report released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that 68.2 percent of all new mothers in North Carolina start breastfeeding. That number is up from 67.3 percent in 2011.

The CDC national Breastfeeding Report Card shows that nationally breastfeeding is increasing, due in part to increased support for new mothers in hospitals. DHHS launched the North Carolina Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation program in 2010, aimed at recognizing those maternity centers that have taken steps to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding in their organizations. Seventeen maternity centers in the state have been recognized as breastfeeding-friendly so far.

“The medical evidence is clear – breastfeeding has remarkable benefits not only for babies but for mothers as well,” said DHHS Secretary Al Delia. “It’s not always easy for new mothers, and extra support and encouragement from hospitals can make a huge difference.”

Though North Carolina’s ranking on the report card has risen, the state still falls below the national average of 76.9 percent. The report also found that in North Carolina, slightly more than 38 percent of mothers are still breastfeeding at six months, with numbers falling to around 20 percent by 12 months.

The full CDC report is available at www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard.htm. To learn more about the North Carolina Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation, visit <http://www.nutritionnc.com/breastfeeding/>.

A list of hospital maternity centers recognized as breastfeeding friendly in North Carolina may be found at <http://www.nutritionnc.com/breastfeeding/awardees.htm>.

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