

Argus Courier - PVH ranks highest in breast-feeding rates

Article published - Apr 11, 2007

## **PVH RANKS HIGHEST IN BREAST-FEEDING RATES**

Petaluma Valley Hospital ranks highest among Sonoma County hospitals in breast-feeding rates of mothers with newborn babies, according to a statewide survey by the California Women, Infants and Children Association and the University of California, Davis Human Lactation Center.

At PVH, 79.3 percent of maternity patients breast feed exclusively and 95.4 percent do so at least part of the time. Both figures are the highest among county hospitals.

Exclusive breast feeding means that no other fluid or food is consumed by an infant.

“These results demonstrate PVH’s philosophy and holistic approach to the birthing process,” said Linda Trout-fetter, the hospital’s perinatal manager and head of its Family Birthing Center. “Certainly, women have choices about breast feeding. But because we’re able to provide a warm, family-centered environment, there is more of an expectation here that they will.”

The Report on California Breast Feeding and Hospital Performance from the statewide survey compared 2004 data from hospitals statewide, and indicated the numbers of postpartum mothers who exclusively breast feed as hospital inpatients, a major indicator of future breast-feeding success. The report is available through the County of Sonoma Public Health Division’s Web site at [www.sonoma-county.org/health/ph/mcah/breastfeeding.htm](http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/ph/mcah/breastfeeding.htm).

Over 83 percent of California mothers choose to breast feed their infants in a hospital, according to the survey. Sonoma County hospitals rank 13th in the state, with a 69.7 percent rate for exclusive breast feeding and a 94 percent rate for some breast feeding.

Hospital policies that encourage breast feeding have an enormous impact on a mother initiating and continuing breast feeding, said Kevin Andrus, director of marketing, communications and public relations for St. Joseph Health System of Sonoma County.

Breast feeding also is widely recognized as the first step in preventing children from becoming overweight or obese, he added.

SJHS of Sonoma County’s Infant Nutrition and Lactation Services

features registered nurses who are trained and experience in breast-feeding education, as well as certified lactation consultants who are available for counseling and support of inpatient and outpatient breast feeding.

PVH recently established a breast feeding task force to implement additional measures to support breast feeding, such as designating a daily quiet time for postpartum patients and their babies. This time allows for breast feeding, bonding and napping to take place without disturbances from hospital personnel.

The task force also is forming a drop-in breast feeding support group facilitated by lactation consultants, and plans to add another drop-in group for Spanish-speaking postpartum mothers.

“We formed the breast feeding task force to look at how to keep our successful breast feeding trend going, not only while maternity patients are in the hospital, but after discharge as well,” Troutfetter said.

More information about PVH’s perinatal services is available at [www.petalumavalleyhospital.org/services\\_birthingcenter.aspx](http://www.petalumavalleyhospital.org/services_birthingcenter.aspx).

Last changed: Apr 10, 2007 © Argus Courier 2007