



Serving Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet & Otsego Counties

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Health Department Receives Gold Workplace Award

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan has been awarded the Gold Workplace Award from the Michigan Breastfeeding Network for the second year in a row for being a breastfeeding-friendly workplace.

The Michigan Breastfeeding Network provides criteria that employers must meet to be considered a breastfeeding-friendly workplace. The Health Department has established a Workplace lactation policy that includes a private space and time to express milk during the workday.

“Support is essential to the success of breastfeeding,” according to Danica Howard, an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant at the Health Department. “That support needs to come from a mother’s community and can come in many forms. Seamless support from the hospital to home can be one of the most critical times, but it’s important for a mother to feel supported throughout the breastfeeding journey, especially when returning to work.”

In addition to creating a workplace culture that supports breastfeeding, the Health Department boasts some of the highest breastfeeding rates among Michigan for mothers who utilize the Women, Infants, Children (WIC) program – 64% at six weeks for Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego Counties, compared to a state average of 49%. Breastfeeding, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), can provide unmatched health benefits for babies and mothers, including reducing risks of asthma, obesity, Type 1 diabetes, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and ear infections in infants who were breastfed, and lowering the mother’s risk of high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, ovarian and breast cancer.

The Health Department has two International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants and four Certified Lactation Specialists within the agency. They also offer free newborn home visits to *any* mother, regardless of income – a visit that often allows for breastfeeding support as those needs arise.



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For additional information about breastfeeding support services, call the Health Department at 1-800-432-4121 or visit nwhealth.org. For additional information on how to become a breastfeeding-friendly workplace, visit mibreastfeeding.org/workplace/.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit nwhealth.org.

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Northwest Michigan

