



Health and Human Services MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 30, 2015

State and local health officials promote breastfeeding

August is National Breastfeeding Month

SARASOTA COUNTY, FL—Local agencies are working together to promote breastfeeding as a vital health activity for nursing mothers and infants and to recognize breastfeeding friendly agencies in honor of National Breastfeeding Month.

The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County’s (DOH-Sarasota) WIC and Healthy Start Programs in collaboration with the Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County, Healthy Sarasota County Collaborative and Healthiest Weight Florida have joined in promoting breastfeeding during August.



“Breastfeeding plays a vital role in the health of both mother and child,” said DOH-Sarasota’s Breastfeeding Coordinator Aubrey Will. “Our Breastfeeding Peer Counselors provide practical education to empower moms to provide optimum nutrition for children.”

Babies receiving only breast milk for the first six months of life are less likely to develop chronic and acute diseases including ear infections, diarrheal diseases, asthma, obesity and respiratory illnesses. Further, breastfeeding for nine months reduces a baby’s odds of being overweight by 30 percent. Mothers benefit from breastfeeding with a decreased risk for breast and ovarian cancers.

The Florida Department of Health, local partners and organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, strongly recommend babies exclusively breastfeed for the first six months of life and continue to breastfeed for one to two years.

“The Breastfeeding Advocates of Sarasota County (BASC), through the Breastfeeding Friendly Sarasota Project, recognizes businesses, health care providers, child care centers and other breastfeeding friendly organizations in Sarasota County,” says Healthy Start Coalition Education Coordinator and BASC Chair Jamee Thumm.”

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MEDIA NOTES:

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Florida has demonstrated a positive trend in breastfeeding from 2013 to 2014. CDC data showed 77 percent of new moms initiated breastfeeding in 2014, up from 71 percent in 2013. Sarasota County has consistently been ahead of the state in its breastfeeding initiation rates.

The Florida Department of Health offers a variety of programs, materials and resources to encourage this breastfeeding trend.

- **DOH-Sarasota WIC and Healthy Start Programs**, visit www.sarasotahealth.org or call 941-861-2900.
- **Breastfeeding and healthy weight**, visit www.HealthiestWeightFL.com/bf.
- **Healthy Start Coalition Breastfeeding Friendly Sarasota Project**, visit <http://healthystartsarasota.org> or call 941-373-7070.

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The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) is part of a statewide network of county health departments that work to protect, promote and improve the health of all people through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities.
View the complete policy at www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx

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