

NEWS RELEASE

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Emporia's Newman Regional Health recognized as High 5 for Mom & Baby Hospital

Newman Regional Health has enhanced its maternity care based on the proven significant health benefits associated with breastfeeding, and now is qualified for the High 5 for Mom & Baby recognition.

The High 5 program -- initiated, funded, and provided at no charge to Kansas hospitals by the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund -- is based on key hospital practices crucial for a successful breastfeeding experience. To date, 42 hospitals have made the commitment to participate in High 5, and Newman Regional is the fourth of those to complete the requirements to achieve the designation.

Heather Arndt, the director of Maternity Services at Newman Regional, coordinated the High 5 education process and guided the hospital staff in making the changes necessary to adhere to the standards of breastfeeding practices established for the High 5 designation. The Health Fund's Vice President for Programs, Virginia Elliott, will be in Emporia this Wednesday, June 25, to present an award to the hospital in recognition of its accomplishment. The brief ceremony is scheduled for 12:15 p.m. at Newman Regional.

The High 5 Program Coordinator, Gwen Whittit, RN, IBCLC, and High 5 educator Libby Rosen, PhD, RN, IBCLC, conducted on-site education classes at Newman Regional in which 23 staff and interested community members participated.

In emphasizing the value of this program to the hospital and its maternity patients, Whittit said that research indicates a link between not breastfeeding and increased health risks for a baby including high blood pressure, type 1 and 2 diabetes, asthma, ear infections, diarrhea, pneumonia, leukemia, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Studies also show a definite correlation to childhood and adolescent obesity for those who were not breastfed.

In addition, mothers derive health benefits according to Whittit. Those who breastfeed have a decreased incidence of premenopausal breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and type 2 diabetes.

The five best practices comprising the High 5 for Mom & Baby standards are: assuring immediate, sustained skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby after birth; giving newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated; allowing "rooming in" so mothers and infants can remain together 24 hours a day; not giving pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants; and providing mothers options for breastfeeding support in the community.

High 5 for Mom & Baby was developed by the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, Hutchinson -- in cooperation with the Kansas Breastfeeding Workgroup -- to encourage Kansas hospitals to embrace an approach to care that supports breastfeeding. More information about the program is available at www.High5Kansas.org.

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