

# **Delaware General Health District**

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# **NEWS RELEASE**

**AUGUST 1<sup>st</sup> MARKS BEGINNING OF BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS MONTH**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DELAWARE, Oh., July 29, 2010** – August is Breastfeeding Awareness Month in Ohio and August 1-7 is World Breastfeeding Week (WBW). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention report that Ohio’s 2009 breastfeeding initiation rate of 58.5 percent ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation, down from 44<sup>th</sup> in 2008. This year’s WBW theme is *Breastfeeding – Just 10 Steps! The Baby Friendly Way*. Health care facilities play a vital role in the establishment of breastfeeding. This theme offers the Delaware General Health District the opportunity to partner with our local hospital and other healthcare providers to institute the World Health Organization’s (WHO) research-based *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*. These steps provide a supportive pathway enabling women to achieve their breastfeeding intentions and guiding the training of healthcare workers in breastfeeding support.

While it is preferred that hospitals institute all *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*, if that is not possible, the following five steps have been identified as the most important:

- Infants are breastfed in the first hour after birth
- Infants stay in the same room as their mothers
- Infants are fed only breast milk and receive no supplementation
- No pacifier is used
- Staff gives mothers a telephone number to call for help with breastfeeding

“If a hospital can institute only one research-based step, that step should be to facilitate skin to skin holding by the mother for up to one hour right after birth,” said Ohio Department of Health Director, Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. “This one step would greatly increase bonding between mothers and babies and provide a supportive setting for natural, baby led breastfeeding.”

A recent article in the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics determined that if 80 percent of U.S. families could comply with medical recommendations to breastfeed exclusively for 6 months, the United States would save \$10.5 billion per year and prevent an excess of 741 deaths, nearly all of which would be in infants.

“The Delaware General Health District will be happy to work with our healthcare providers to implement the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*. Our goal is to improve the health of all of our residents,” said Laurie Thuman, Delaware General Health District WIC Program Manager.

“Ultimately, our whole society benefits from having healthier mothers, babies and children when breastfeeding is promoted, protected and supported.”

For more information about breastfeeding in Delaware County, please call the WIC office at the Delaware General Health District at 740-203-2050.