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Press Release

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Santa Cruz County Celebrates all Three Hospitals receiving the Baby-Friendly Designation

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY - All three birthing facilities in Santa Cruz County-- Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center, Dominican Hospital Santa Cruz, and Watsonville Community Hospital—have earned the prestigious Baby-Friendly Hospital designation.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is a global program that requires hospitals to provide mothers with the information, confidence, and skills necessary to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding and/or safely feed formula. To earn the Baby-Friendly designation hospitals must complete 10 rigorous steps, which include developing policies, training staff, and educating patients and then passing a comprehensive onsite review by surveyors. Other key requirements include emphasizing mother-baby bonding with practices such as placing the baby on the mother's chest immediately after birth, and having mother and newborn share the same room.

“The staff at our hospitals spent tireless hours preparing for their reviews and deserve our recognition and appreciation,” said Dana Wagner who is chair of the County Breastfeeding Coalition. Baby-Friendly Hospital certification lasts for 5 years before a hospital has to apply for re-certification.

In addition, for the third year in a row, Santa Cruz County ranked highest in the state for any and exclusive breastfeeding in the 2018 California in-hospital breastfeeding initiation rate report. “This ranking really is a consequence of the Baby-Friendly system and practice changes our community has implemented,” said Kimlin McDaniel Keith, staffer for the Breastfeeding Coalition.

There will be celebration of this landmark achievement on Thursday, February 28 at 7 pm, following the 5:30 screening of the short film Giving Birth in America at the Del Mar Theatre, 1124 Pacific Avenue in Santa Cruz.

Many congratulations to Dominican Hospital Santa Cruz, Watsonville Community Hospital, and Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center for earning this prestigious designation.

For more information, contact Dana Wagner, Chair of the Santa Cruz County Breastfeeding Coalition
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