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## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN LAKE COUNTY IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE INCREASE IN BREASTFEEDING RATE



### Contact:

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**Eustis, FL**– The Florida Department of Health in Lake County is pleased to announce an increase in breastfeeding amongst mothers who participate in the WIC program to 79%. One of the objectives of Healthy People 2020 is to increase the percent of infants breastfed to 81.9%. The Lake WIC staff have been encouraging, educating and supporting WIC mothers in breastfeeding. Each WIC site is staffed with an experienced Breastfeeding Peer Counselor who is able to provide WIC clients with breastfeeding education, techniques and support. The Breastfeeding Peer Counselors and an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant also coordinate care with local hospitals.

“Due to the joint efforts of WIC and Florida Hospital Waterman, Leesburg Regional Medical Center and South Lake Hospital the WIC breastfeeding rates have increased in our county”, states Mary Stickney, Florida Department of Health in Lake County WIC Director. “I’m really proud of what we have accomplished thus far and excited about the direction we are going”

The Florida Department of Health in Lake County is working with three local birthing hospitals to integrate the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding into their maternity care practices which can lead to Baby-Friendly Hospital designation. Florida Hospital Waterman, Leesburg Regional, and South Lake Hospital are currently working towards Baby-Friendly Hospital Designation. The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is a global program launched by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund to encourage and recognize hospitals and birthing facilities that offer the finest care for infant feeding and mother/baby bonding.

In addition, WIC breastfeeding support group meetings are held each month to help pregnant women, as well as, women who are currently breastfeeding their baby. The support group meetings, which are free and open to the public, are held the 4th Tuesday of every month, at 10 am, at the following WIC offices:

Clermont WIC

875 Oakley Seaver Dr., Clermont

Leesburg WIC

1904 Griffin Rd., Leesburg

Umatilla WIC

249 E. Collins St., Umatilla

For more information regarding the monthly support group meetings, please contact Jennifer Bacon, International Board Certified Lactation Consultant and Breastfeeding Peer Counselor

Coordinator for the Department of Health in Lake County WIC Program at 352-771-5563.

For more information about the Florida WIC program call 1-800-342-3556 or visit [www.FloridaWIC.org](http://www.FloridaWIC.org). To learn more about the benefits of breastfeeding visit [www.Illi.org](http://www.Illi.org); or [www.flbreastfeeding.org](http://www.flbreastfeeding.org).

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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