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Division of Public and Behavioral Health NEWS RELEASE

The Division of Public and Behavioral Health Recognizes the Efforts of Moms Throughout the State for Their Efforts Related to Breastfeeding

Carson City – Carson City – As Mother's Day approaches, the Division of Public and Behavioral Health wants to recognize the efforts of moms throughout the state for their efforts related to breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding has been cited as one of the most impactful health behaviors for both mothers and children. A recent study published in *The Lancet* found that if the majority of women breastfed exclusively for six months, 823,00 child lives would be saved and 20,000 maternal deaths would be prevented, translating into a savings of \$300 billion US dollars. The study concluded that "breastmilk makes the world healthier, smarter, and more equal. Breastfeeding reduces infant morbidity and mortality, increases IQ scores, improves school achievement, and boosts adult earnings."

The reasons why many mothers avoid or stop breastfeeding are varied and non-trivial, and range from pain to fear of public embarrassment to lack of support. Nevada has spent the past decade emphasizing breastfeeding support as a top public health priority and the efforts are paying off. Since 2013, three Nevada maternity centers have been awarded the Baby Friendly Designation – an honor which reflects the facility's efforts to the delivery of evidence-based best practice in breastfeeding support. In 2015, Nevada was the recipient of the United States Department of Agriculture's Breastfeeding Bonus Award for the greatest increase in exclusive breastfeeding rates between 2013 and 2014.

To address the fear of embarrassment with public nursing experienced by many women, a "Breastfeeding Welcomed Here" campaign to educate business leaders and staff about the Nevada law which protects a woman's right to breastfeed in public has been put into place. To date sixty Nevada businesses have signed a pledge to provide a welcoming environment to nursing mothers, and ensure that complaints made about the nursing mother are resolved through education and are not passed on to the mother.


Earlier this month, Nevada's Statewide Breastfeeding Coordinator, Lindsey Dermid-Gray was invited to participate in a national cohort of breastfeeding support professionals to address inequities experienced by mothers and babies of color in the maternity setting. Participation in this cohort will serve to strengthen and tailor the support provided to Nevada's increasingly diverse population.

To learn more about Nevada's Breastfeeding Welcomed Here Campaign, go to <http://nevadabreastfeeds.org/breastfeeding-welcomed-here/>

For more information about the Division of Public and Behavioral Health, go to <http://dpbh.nv.gov/>.

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