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Idaho State Journal

Pocatello, Idaho

Thursday Jan. 11, 2018

Staff Report

Page 1 of 2

Baby Friendly

BMH receives prestigious international recognition as a baby-friendly designated birth facility

BLACKFOOT — When it comes to labor and delivery, Bingham Memorial Hospital offers a premier birthing center. Not only is their staff highly skilled, but the facility is beautiful. In their ongoing effort to offer the best caring and compassionate services to the women of Eastern Idaho, BMH is pleased to deliver the exciting news that they have received the prestigious international recognition as an official Baby-Friendly Designated birthing facility by Baby-Friendly USA.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital is a global program and effort launched by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund. The program is dedicated to encouraging and recognizing hospitals and birthing centers that offer an optimal level of care, as BMH does. They have been awarded this designation for successfully implementing the "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding" and the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes.

"Achieving the Baby-Friendly designation is not an easy task," says Trish MacEnroe, executive director of Baby-Friendly USA. "Based on the results of data collected during a rigorous on-site assessment survey, Corrective Action Project, and the final review of the External Review Board, it has been determined that Bingham Memorial has implemented all of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and has met the requirement of purchasing breast milk substitutes."

The 10 steps were developed by a team of global experts and consist of evidence-based practices that have been shown to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration. In the United States, for example, new mothers exposed to at least six of the 10 steps were 13 times more likely to continue breastfeeding at six weeks postpartum when compared to mothers who had not been exposed to any of the 10 steps during their birthing hospitalization. Mothers are provided information, confidence and skills needed to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding their infants.

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Helena Callister and Heather VanOrden, lactation specialists and baby-friendly hospital coordinators at BMH, as well as Dr. Heather Pugmire, Ob-Gyn, and Dr. Brian Carrigan, family medicine specialist, were instrumental in helping BMH to receive this designation.

“This designation and training focuses a lot of attention on the importance of mother and baby bonding as soon as possible, especially when a newborn is welcomed into this world and meets their mother for the first time,” Callister said. “Having an environment at Bingham Memorial that not only supports this bonding, but encourages this very special time, can begin the bonding process that only a mother and child will have together.”

More than two decades of research have established that breast milk is perfectly suited to nourish infants and protect them from illness. Breast-fed infants have lower rates of hospital admissions, ear infections, diarrhea, rashes, allergies and other medical problems than formula fed-babies, according to the Food and Drug Administration. The greatest benefits are derived when babies are breastfed exclusively for the first six months of life.

“All of BMH’s obstetricians, pediatricians and nursing staff have been educated and trained in the skills needed to support and assist moms and babies with breastfeeding,” VanOrden said. “We also offer in-patient breastfeeding education and lactation consultations.”

“Thank you to everyone who worked diligently throughout 2017 to implement everything necessary to exceed the requirements to receive this prestigious Baby-Friendly designation,” says Jake Erickson, CEO of BMH. “Because of everyone’s hard work and dedication, we’re now able to provide this extra special care to our newborns, giving them a chance to start on a healthy note from day one, and to continue building a stronger and healthier community over time.”

In the United States, there are only 477 active Baby-Friendly hospitals and birth centers. BMH is now one of only two hospitals in the state of Idaho to have this Baby-Friendly designation, and there is only one hospital in Utah to have met the requirements. There are more than 20,000 designated Baby-Friendly hospitals and birth centers worldwide.

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