

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL EARNS PRESTIGIOUS RE-DESIGNATION
AS A BABY FRIENDLY® HOSPITAL**

*Designation Recognizes Hospitals That Encourage and Support Breastfeeding
for New Mothers*



Newark, NJ – As part of its continued commitment to the care of expectant mothers, postpartum parents, and their babies, University Hospital (UH), New Jersey’s only public academic medical center and principal teaching Hospital for all Newark-based medical education, including Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and Rutgers School of Dental Medicine, announced today that the Hospital has been re-designated as a *Baby-Friendly® Hospital* by Baby Friendly USA (BFUSA). UH was the first hospital in Essex County to receive this designation, when it received the initial designation in 2016.

The program encourages mothers to nourish newborns with breast milk and promotes a rooming-in policy where babies spend a majority of their first days in mom’s maternity hospital room. This provides for ease of access to the baby for breastfeeding and promotes skin-to-skin contact.

“University Hospital is very proud to be re-designated as a Baby-Friendly® Hospital, reinforcing our continual efforts to focus on the comprehensive care needs of the moms in our community and their babies. This honor, in particular, focuses on our role as a leading provider of lactation support for new mothers,” said **Mary K. E. Maples, Interim President and CEO of University Hospital**. “Our mission challenges us to partner with our communities to deliver exceptional care to every patient, every time. Adhering to Baby-Friendly principles enables us to do exactly that.”

“Our partners at University Hospital continue to play a key role in advancing Nurture NJ’s mission of making New Jersey the gold standard for maternal and infant health. In fact, one of the recommendations in the Nurture NJ strategic plan is to increase the number of Baby Friendly hospitals in our state to support new mothers and their babies. The Hospital’s re-designation as a *Baby-Friendly® Hospital* is yet another step towards making New Jersey the safest and most equitable state in the nation to deliver and raise a baby,” said **New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy**.

Approximately 1,600 babies are born each year at University Hospital, an average of more than four births per day. In addition to the number of births, the Hospital hosts more than 24,000 prenatal patient visits per year and has a staff of 40 board-certified physicians (from Rutgers New Jersey Medical School) and labor and delivery registered nurses serving new mothers, babies, and their families.

“The health and wellbeing of our new mothers and their babies is a top priority for University Hospital. We encourage each of our new moms to breastfeed, as it offers newborns the best option for regular nourishment. The Baby-Friendly® designation reflects our commitment to providing a safe space for support and education around breastfeeding,” said **Maria Brennan, DNP, RN, CPHQ, Chief Nursing Officer at UH.**

University Hospital proudly ranks among the lowest Cesarean-section rates of all hospitals in New Jersey, has the most successful rates of Vaginal Birth after Cesarean (VBAC), and claims one of lowest episiotomy rates in the state. In addition to serving mothers with standard pregnancies, University Hospital’s Regional Perinatal Center handles some of the state’s most complicated pregnancies and medically fragile newborns. The Center offers ancillary services such as counseling for women with chronic health conditions, evaluation and prevention for moms at high risk for preterm births, and care for pregnant women with significant medical problems like hypertension, heart disease, immunodeficiency conditions, opioid addiction, and diabetes.

“The first days of a baby’s life are a crucial time for parental bonding with the newborn. Providing the best possible encouragement and support for breastfeeding is very important,” said **Lynda Arnold, MHA, RN, Director of Family Health Services at UH.** “As we continue to build upon the success of our maternity care program, it is designations like this that reinforce the commitment of our passionate staff in providing our patients with quality care at all stages of life.”

Also at UH, funding provided by University Hospital Foundation allows mothers and their babies to obtain necessary resources before leaving the Hospital. These include supplies and equipment like electric breast pumps, nursing pads, car seats and transportation. To learn more or support this work, call 973-973-1873 or visit <https://give.uhnjfoundation.org/moms-and-babies>

In 1991, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) launched the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), a global program to encourage the broad-scale implementation of the [*Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*](#). The BFHI assists hospitals in giving mothers the information, confidence, and skills necessary to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding their babies. In cases where patients have a medical indication, or have made an informed decision to use formula, the designation also certifies the safe preparation and feeding of formula to babies. The BFHI program works with national authorities across the world to confer the Baby-Friendly® designation in their nation. More than 20,000 maternity facilities in 150 countries around the world have earned the Baby-Friendly designation.

The re-designation, part of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, is granted for a period of five years, and is based on a rigorous onsite assessment survey, completion of any required corrective actions, the successful implementation of the [*Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*](#), and the availability of breast milk substitutes.

“The criteria are challenging, as they are designed to set the standards for the best possible breastfeeding support for mother and infant in the maternity setting,” said **Becky Fallon, MSN, RN, BFUSA’s Accreditation Director.** “Attaining the standards has definite costs, both in human and financial resources, yet the savings in terms of the quality of care provided, the resulting decrease in morbidity and mortality associated with optimal breastfeeding, and customer satisfaction, are well worth the investment.”

About University Hospital

University Hospital is part of one of the nation's leading academic medical centers and is the Level 1 Trauma Center for Northern New Jersey. Located at University Heights in Newark, University Hospital is a principal teaching hospital of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and a regional resource for advanced services across many medical specialties. For more information about University Hospital, please visit www.uhnj.org.