

Funding provided by:



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Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento is First Hospital in Sacramento County to Receive Prestigious Baby-Friendly™ Designation

Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento Medical Center has become the first hospital in Sacramento County to receive the prestigious international recognition as a Baby-Friendly™ birth facility for its efforts to promote successful breastfeeding. The designation was made possible through a training grant from The First 5 Sacramento Commission, which has funded the Baby Friendly process and training for Sacramento County hospitals and also funds breastfeeding services through WIC

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is a program of the World Health Organization and UNICEF that encourages and recognizes hospitals that offer an optimal level of care for breastfeeding mothers and their babies. Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento is one of only 83 Baby-Friendly hospitals in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, less than 2 percent of U.S. hospitals providing birthing services in the U.S. are Baby-Friendly designated.

"Being designated the county's first Baby-Friendly hospital is an incredible honor, and a testament to the commitment our physicians and staff have for making sure our new moms are successful in giving their newborns the healthiest start possible," said Max Villalobos, senior vice president for Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento.

"Research overwhelmingly shows that breastfeeding benefits both mothers and babies," said Joni Wuthrich, director of perinatal services. "It helps to decrease the mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, and for babies it strengthens their immune system and helps to reduce allergies, respiratory infections and digestive issues."

The South Sacramento Medical Center completed a rigorous 10-step designation program that included developing a specific policy that promotes breastfeeding, training all staff and encouraging new mothers to breastfeed within the first hour of their baby's life.

Other steps to obtaining Baby-Friendly status include practicing unrestricted breastfeeding, encouraging new mothers to "room in" with their baby to allow them to form a better bond and establishing support groups that help new mothers after they are discharged from the hospital. Final designation is awarded after a Baby-Friendly USA site visit to the hospital to verify that all components of the program are in place

The Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento Medical Center consistently ranks the best in the county in an annual inpatient breastfeeding study conducted by the UC Davis Human Lactation Center and the California WIC Association. In the most recent survey of Greater Sacramento hospitals, South Sacramento ranked the highest in ensuring that newborns are fed breastmilk exclusively during their hospital stay.

"Kaiser Permanente has shown incredible dedication to promoting breastfeeding," said Debra Payne, Program Planner for First 5 Sacramento.. "We are pleased to have supported them in obtaining their designation and look forward to seeing them continue to promote breastfeeding to new mothers."

The benefits of breastfeeding also translate into millions of dollars of savings to the nation's health care system through decreased hospitalizations and pediatric clinic visits. For example, studies have shown that prolonged episodes of ear infections were 80 percent lower in breastfed infants compared to non-breastfed infants. Ear infections alone cost billions of dollars per year, according to Baby-Friendly USA.

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About Kaiser Permanente

Kaiser Permanente is committed to helping shape the future of health care. We are recognized as one of America's leading health care providers and not-for-profit health plans. Founded in 1945, our mission is to provide high-quality, affordable health care services to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve 8.6 million members in nine states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal physicians, specialists and team of caregivers.

About First 5 Sacramento

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages zero to five. First 5 Sacramento distributes approximately \$17 million a year in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs. For information on First 5 Sacramento programs call 916-876-5865 or online at www.First5Sacramento.net.