



Knox County Health Department

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KCHD and CCETN Launch New Breastfeeding Education Curriculum

Knoxville, Tenn.— The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) and Catholic Charities of East Tennessee (CCETN) are launching a new curriculum designed to promote breastfeeding to culturally diverse populations.

The curriculum was developed with support from the University of Tennessee Department of Nutrition and will primarily be used by clients of CCETN’s Pregnancy Help Centers (PHC). In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Knoxville Pregnancy Help Center provided more than 1,160 families with pregnancy and parenting support and administered nearly 6,500 in-person, live-streamed and Zoom parenting education courses.

“Breastfeeding has many benefits for both mothers and infants, including reduced risk of several diseases,” said Sarah Lisson, nutritionist with KCHD’s Healthy Weight program. “KCHD is committed to identifying barriers to breastfeeding so more women can feel empowered to lay this healthy foundation for their baby’s life.”

“Breastfeeding can be daunting, and this curriculum is so special in that we’re able to continue empowering both our current and future clients with the support they need to have healthy breastfeeding relationships with their baby, all while focusing on representation,” said Ernestine Meiners, program leader of CCETN’s Knoxville Pregnancy Help Center.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), 84.1% of infants are ever breastfed. Tennessee falls below the national average for breastfeeding initiation, at 75.8%. Furthermore, only 27.2% of infants are still exclusively breastfed at 6 months, as advised by national recommendations.

The new breastfeeding curriculum consists of eight video lessons, which feature KCHD staff and CCETN volunteers and clients. Topics range from breastfeeding basics and recommendations to introducing solid foods and weaning from breastmilk. After watching each video, PHC clients will have the opportunity to speak with a lactation consultant and earn “Baby Bucks” which they can then exchange for free supplies, including breastfeeding aids and other baby necessities.

For more information about KCHD’s breastfeeding resources, email Sarah Lisson at sarah.lisson@knoxcounty.org or call (865) 215-5291. For more information about accessing breastfeeding education and other services through CCETN’s Knoxville Pregnancy Help Center, email Ernestine Meiners at emeiners@ccetn.org or call (865) 212-4942.



About Knox County Health Department

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 240 team members, KCHD's broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

About Catholic Charities of East Tennessee: Empowered by the grace of Jesus Christ, Catholic Charities of East Tennessee, founded in 1989, addresses the unmet needs of the most vulnerable of our region by providing shelter, nourishment, counseling and education, in order to foster human dignity. Our programs include: Children's Emergency Shelter, Columbus Home Assisting Parents (C.H.A.P), Crazy Quilt Food Pantry, Horizon House/Five Rivers Community Supportive Housing, Office of Immigrant Services, Pregnancy Help Center, Samaritan Place, The Home Place, Counseling Services, and HOPE Kitchen. For more information, visit. www.CCETN.org.

