



# MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Local agencies celebrate World Breastfeeding Week** *Goal to increase breastfeeding rates*

*Knoxville, Tenn.* – The Knox County Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program; Knox County Health Department (KCHD); and East Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition will host their seventh annual World Breastfeeding Week kick-off **Friday, Aug. 4 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Ijams Nature Center**, 2915 Island Home Ave. Breastfeeding mothers, moms-to-be, families and breastfeeding advocates are encouraged to attend the free event.

“Breastfeeding is one of the best things a mother can do to protect the health of her infant, yet only 16.1 percent of Tennessee’s babies are exclusively breastfed by 6 months of age, the recommendation,” said KCHD Director Dr. Martha Buchanan. “We know education alone isn’t enough to increase breastfeeding rates. We must find ways, as a community, to be more supportive of moms and their efforts to breastfeed.”

In addition to informational booths, activities at the Aug. 4 event include:

- The Big Latch On – An opportunity for local moms to participate in the international Big Latch On, where women from around the world meet at registered locations to breastfeed their children at the same time. Mothers can register beginning at 9:45 a.m. at Ijams. The Big Latch On takes place at 10:30 a.m.
- Marcie Singleton Award Announcement – A tireless advocate for a mother’s right to breastfeed, Marcie Singleton was the nutrition director and breastfeeding coordinator for the Knox County WIC Program. The annual award is given to a business or individual who goes above and beyond to promote and/or be supportive of breastfeeding.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2016 Breastfeeding Report Card, 24.7 percent of babies born in Tennessee were breastfed at 12 months of age; the national Healthy People 2020 goal, a common health benchmark, is 34 percent. Breastfed babies are less likely to develop numerous health conditions, including diabetes and obesity. In fact, a baby’s risk of becoming an overweight child goes down with each month of breastfeeding. In addition to the health benefits for mother and child, a study published in 2010 in the journal *Pediatrics* estimated that the nation would save \$13 billion per year in health care and other costs if 90 percent of U.S. babies were exclusively breastfed for six months. A mother’s breastfeeding success rate can be greatly improved through active support from her family, friends, community, clinicians, employer and community leaders.

More information about the Aug. 4 event is available by contacting Knox County WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator Robin Penegar at 865-215-5060.

### **About Knox County Health Department:**

The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is a governmental agency dedicated to making every person a healthy person. As the first health department in Tennessee to achieve national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, KCHD’s mission is to encourage, promote and assure the development of an active, healthy community through innovative public health practices. The organization conducts disease surveillance, prevention and control; emergency preparedness; nutrition and physical activity promotion; tobacco use prevention; health equity promotion; immunizations; and much more. For more information, visit [www.knoxcounty.org/health](http://www.knoxcounty.org/health).

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