

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS



# MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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July 24, 2019

## 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 La Leche League of Knoxville in collaboration with Calani Lactation Services will celebrate World Breastfeeding Week on **Friday, Aug. 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 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.

“Increasing breastfeeding rates is one of the best ways we can improve infant health. Unfortunately, less than a quarter of Tennessee women are meeting the recommendation to give their infant only breastmilk for the first 6 months of life,” said KCHD Director Dr. Martha Buchanan. “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. 2 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 9:30 a.m. at Ijams. The Big Latch On takes place at 10:30 a.m. It’s helpful to bring a camp chair or blanket, as most of the event will take place outside.
- 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.

This year’s slogan for World Breastfeeding Week is “Empower Parents, Enable Breastfeeding”. It was chosen to encourage the creation of an environment where mothers can breastfeed optimally. A mother’s breastfeeding success rate can be greatly improved through active support from her family, friends, community, clinicians, employer and community leaders.



According to the national Healthy People 2020 goal, a common health benchmark, breastfeeding support from worksites is also critical as women return to work. Healthy People 2020 includes a goal to increase the proportion of employers that have worksite lactation support programs. In 2018, almost half (49%) of employers provide a separate onsite lactation room/mother's room.

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.

More information about the Aug. 2 event is available by contacting Knox County WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator Robin Penegar at 865-215-5060.

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

As 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. KCHD **investigates disease outbreaks, identifies community health threats, conducts extensive outreach and education, prepares for public health emergencies, provides and connects the public with medical care, enforces food safety and air quality laws, and more.** For more information, visit [www.knoxcounty.org/health](http://www.knoxcounty.org/health).