

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PROMOTES BREASTFEEDING
WIC moms who choose to breastfeed are celebrated during World Breastfeeding Week

(White Plains, NY) -- To promote the important benefits of breastfeeding and to honor mothers who choose to breastfeed their babies, the Westchester County Health Department WIC program held breastfeeding celebrations for clients in its Yonkers and Port Chester and clinics this week, during World Breastfeeding Week.

Forty-four women who currently breastfeed their babies and pregnant women who plan to were congratulated by WIC staff and presented with certificates. The women shared their stories, enjoyed refreshments and played games that demonstrated their breastfeeding know-how.

“The Health Department encourages all new moms to try breastfeeding and urges residents to support the efforts of all mothers to continue breastfeeding as their babies grow,” said Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD. “Breastfeeding provides important nutrients and protection against diseases for babies and it benefits moms, too. Congratulations to everyone who gives this selfless gift.”

The Health Department’s Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) currently provides services to approximately 8,000 enrolled participants. During the first six months of this year, on average, nearly half of all WIC infants were breastfeeding, and of those who breastfeed, one in five were exclusively breastfeeding.

WIC is a federally funded short-term nutrition intervention program with long-term health benefits. WIC provides nutrition assessment, education and counseling, breastfeeding promotion and support, along with vouchers to buy healthy food and referrals for health and social services. The WIC Program has 7 certified lactation counselors on staff to help women WIC participants with breastfeeding.

Benefits to babies who receive their mother’s milk:

- fewer ear infections, respiratory infections and digestive infection;
- lower risk of developing diabetes or cancer;
- lower risk of developing asthma and allergies;
- less likely to be obese later in life; and
- less likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Benefits to women who breastfeed their infants:

- recover faster after birth and tend to lose pregnancy weight faster;
- less likely to develop diabetes;
- reduced risk for breast and ovarian cancer;
- less stress and reduced risk of postpartum depression;
- enhance their bond with their baby through skin-to-skin touching and eye contact that is shared during breastfeeding;
- save time, breast milk is always ready;
- save money by not buying formula.

At the WIC celebrations, diapers were provided by the Diaper Bank of Westchester in partnership with the County's Early Intervention Program and raffle prizes were donated by EmpowerYou, a program that aims to help residents in economically challenged communities.

You can also find more information at, <http://health.westchestergov.com/breastfeeding> like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wchealthdept and follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/wchealthdept

About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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