



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Health Department Observes World Breastfeeding Week *United Way of Southwestern PA Wins Breastfeeding Friendly Place Award*

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department's [Women, Infants and Children Program](#) (WIC) and the Allegheny County Breastfeeding Coalition (ACBC) are commemorating World Breastfeeding Week by announcing the United Way of Southwestern PA as this year's winner of the Breastfeeding Friendly Place Award.

This is the 24th year of the Breastfeeding Friendly Place Awards, which recognize workplaces, public places and other sites away from home that make an extra effort to accommodate breastfeeding mothers.

The United Way of Southwestern PA is a non-profit that focuses on solving community issues. Its mission is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities to advance the common good. This caring philosophy shows in their efforts to create a breastfeeding friendly environment for staff when they return to work. The United Way of Southwestern PA provides a comfortable and welcoming space for breastfeeding mothers, and the organization's policies include providing pumping time for mothers returning to work and supporting a lactation room that provides privacy and refrigeration spaces. The entire organization is very supportive of their coworkers breastfeeding journeys.

Breastfeeding initiation rates have risen slowly and steadily for the past 20 years in the United States. As of 2017, 84% of all infants born in the U.S. received at least one breastmilk feeding. That was up from 76% in 2010. However, the rates of exclusive breastfeeding and the duration of breastfeeding lag behind the [Healthy People 2020 goals](#) set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2017, 58% of infants were still being fed any breastmilk at age 6 months and only 35% at 12 months. With supportive employers and communities, women are more likely to reach their own breastfeeding goals and the national recommendations of exclusive breastmilk feeding for the first 6 months of life and continuation of breastfeeding with the addition of solid food until at least 12 months of age.

The longer a baby is breastfed, the greater the health benefits for both mother and baby. Women who don't breastfeed are at higher risk of developing high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and breast and ovarian cancer as they age. Infants who are not fed breastmilk are at higher risk of developing ear infections, diarrhea, asthma, and obesity. More information about the benefits of breastfeeding can be found [here](#).

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