

World Breastfeeding Week Focuses on Empowering Parents To Reach Breastfeeding Goals

The Cleveland County Health Department (CCHD) is promoting World Breastfeeding Week, Aug.1-7, with the theme “Empower Parents, Enable Breastfeeding.” The theme focuses on supporting both parents to be empowered in order to facilitate reaching breastfeeding goals.

Empowerment is a process which requires evidence-based, unbiased information and support to create the enabling environment where mothers can breastfeed optimally. Breastfeeding is in the mother’s domain and when fathers, partners, families, workplaces, and communities support her, breastfeeding improves.

According to the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data from 2017, 85.5% of Oklahoma mothers began breastfeeding their babies after birth. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusively breastfeeding for at least 6 months of age, continuing to 1 year of age or beyond.

Terry Bryce is the director of the OSDH Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Service, which provides nutrition services for infants and children up to age 5.

“The WIC program plays a vital role in the promotion and support of breastfeeding,” said Bryce. “Breastfeeding peer counselors, international board certified lactation consultants and other lactation professionals help WIC elevate the capacity of breastfeeding to improve health outcomes of mothers and infants.”

The Oklahoma Toddler Survey (TOTS) from 2015-2017 indicates 44.6% of mothers were breastfeeding at six months and 25.1% of mothers were breastfeeding at 12 months or more. The OSDH supports breastfeeding mothers in hopes of achieving the Healthy People 2020 breastfeeding objective to increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed at six months to nearly 61% and at one year to 34%.

For more information about breastfeeding, how to find a local lactation consultant, or how to become a recognized breastfeeding friendly worksite, visit the OSDH breastfeeding website <http://bis.health.ok.gov>, or call the Oklahoma Breastfeeding Hotline toll free at 1-877-271-MILK (6455). For more information about WIC, including clinic locations, call 1-888-655-2942.



**Cleveland County
Health Department**