

For Immediate Release

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GR Baker Hospital designated a Baby-Friendly Hospital: one of just eight designations nation-wide

G.R. Baker Memorial Hospital in Quesnel is the first hospital west of Ontario to achieve the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly designation. Northern Health staff, community stakeholders and representatives of the BC Perinatal Health Program celebrated the unveiling of the official plaque announcing the achievement today.

“We are very proud to have been designated a Baby-Friendly facility,” said Quesnel health services administrator Fraser Bell. “The process has been a long one, but the work put into this achievement by many very dedicated staff at GR Baker Memorial Hospital has been worth it for the mothers and babies we care for, and for our facility.”

The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) provides Baby-Friendly designations to hospitals (and community health facilities) that successfully meet the WHO/UNICEF 10-Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. The BCC is the national authority for the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) in Canada; a globally recognized quality standard to improve breastfeeding outcomes for mothers and babies. The process of achieving the designation can take several years. GR Baker began this process in June 1999.

“Receiving the Baby Friendly designation is a huge honour for G.R. Baker Memorial Hospital and exciting news for the families and children on this region,” said Rustad. “Children are the foundation of our community and achieving the Baby Friendly designation is a testament to the excellence of maternity care at this facility and the dedication of hospital staff to providing all children born at G.R. Baker with the best possible start in life.”

Among the efforts involved in achieving Baby-Friendly status for GR Baker Memorial Hospital were reviews, revisions and implementation of breastfeeding policies; education of maternity, support and administrative staff, physicians, clients and families on the science and benefits of breastfeeding, and; establishment of a multi-disciplinary Baby-Friendly advisory committee.

“An important aspect of the BFI Assessment is that it doesn’t just ask the staff how well they are doing. The assessment is heavily reliant on the words of the families receiving care,” said BCC lead assessor Marina Green. “The mothers we interviewed were delighted with their care.”

GR Baker Memorial Hospital is now one of eight Baby-Friendly hospitals and birthing centres in Canada, and is the only one outside of Ontario and Quebec. The designation requires on-going effort to maintain, and is re-assessed every five years.

“This is a big achievement by the staff at GR Baker,” said Northern Health CEO Cathy Ulrich. “We are proud that a Northern Health facility is the first in Western Canada to be designated a Baby-Friendly facility.”

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