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HAZEL HAWKINS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS BABY-FRIENDLY DESIGNATION

May 8, 2024 - Hollister, Calif. – Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital (HHMH) is proud to announce that it has achieved the highly prestigious international Baby-Friendly designation after a rigorous review process conducted by Baby-Friendly USA, the organization responsible for bestowing this certification in the United States.

This distinguished honor demonstrates that HHMH is adhering to the highest standards of care for breastfeeding mothers and their babies. These standards are built on the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*, a set of evidence-based practices recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for optimal infant feeding support in the precious first days of a newborn's life.

"The hospital experience strongly influences a mother's ability to start and continue breastfeeding," said Jana Tomasini, RN, Board Certified Lactation Consultant. "We are committed to implementing evidence-based care through the Baby-Friendly designation to ensure that mothers delivering in our facility who intend to breastfeed, as well as those who cannot or decide not to breastfeed, are fully supported."

As the project leader, Tomasini spearheaded a team comprised of multiple HHMH patient care, ancillary and support services departments, clinic providers and hospital physicians, private pediatrician offices, San Benito County Public Health Department, First Five and Healthy Mothers Health Babies. "It is extremely rare for hospitals to pass the review process on their first application and we had an incredible team that helped us to achieve this goal" stated Tomasini.

The Hazel Hawkins Hospital Foundation Board also strongly believed in the importance of this certification and allocated over \$29,000 in funding to get the program started, achieve milestones and complete the certification process.

"We are extremely proud to be recognized for the hard work of our team members throughout the Baby-Friendly process," said Mary Casillas, CEO. "Hazel Hawkins Hospital is committed to providing the support, education and resources moms need to successfully initiate breastfeeding and continue breastfeeding when they leave our care."

HHMH joins the prestigious list being one of only 566 hospitals (or 9% of the hospitals in the United States), to achieve this designation. These facilities provide an environment that supports breastfeeding while respecting every woman's right to make the best decision for herself and her family.

About Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital

Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital is a full-service, public agency hospital delivering modern medicine and compassionate care to the growing San Benito County community. HHMH offers hundreds of health services across multiple locations, including top-tier specialists, a modern Emergency Department, and a state-of-the-art Women's Center. To learn more about Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital and the Hazel Hawkins Hospital Foundation, please visit www.hazelhawkins.com.

About Baby-Friendly USA

As the accrediting body and national authority for the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in the United States, Baby-Friendly USA is responsible for upholding the highest standards in infant feeding care by coordinating and conducting all activities necessary to confer the prestigious Baby-Friendly designation and ensure the widespread adoption of the BFHI in the US. Learn more about Baby-Friendly USA and the BFHI at www.babyfriendlyusa.org.