



County of Yolo

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yolo County Hosts Community Walk to Celebrate Breastfeeding

Woodland, CA— On August 13, 2009, Yolo County will celebrate breastfeeding and encourage continued community support for breastfeeding mothers. Yolo County is one of several communities to hold this event that raises awareness about the importance of breastfeeding.

Sponsored by the Community Breastfeeding Coalition of Yolo County, in partnership with the Yolo County Health Department and Yolo County WIC Program, the walk will begin at 10 a.m. at the Herbert Bauer Health Building at 137 North Cottonwood St. in Woodland. A small reception will be held after the walk to honor those breastfeeding mothers who participate.

Thousands of moms and babies will walk in local communities throughout the State of California to raise support for breastfeeding moms. The purpose of the Breastfeeding Walk is to highlight the need for breastfeeding mothers to have support in the home, the community and the workplace for breastfeeding success. Research has shown that breastfeeding significantly boosts infants' immune systems by reducing allergies, diarrhea, and ear and urinary tract infections. More recently, breastfeeding has been found to play a pivotal role in preventing childhood obesity.

The theme for this year's breastfeeding walk is **Breastfeeding: The Right Answer In Tough Times**, highlighting the vital role that breastfeeding plays in an emergency. An emergency can include a flu pandemic, natural disaster, a house fire, and even the unexpected financial hardship of losing one's job. Infants and young children are the most vulnerable populations in an emergency and breastfeeding can be critical to their health and survival. "In these challenging times, breastfeeding is not only the healthier choice, but a more economical choice," states Samantha Pfeifer, Yolo County WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator. "Not only do families save by not having to buy formula, but they also save through reduced health care costs and absenteeism at work, since their babies get sick less often."

"This is an opportunity to really send the message – this year, now – that there's nothing more important than breastfeeding to a newborn and an infant, really nothing," stated Dr. Joseph Iser, Yolo County Health Officer at a Yolo County Board of Supervisor's meeting. Breastfeeding has always been the best recommendation for infant nutrition, but in the middle of an influenza pandemic, Iser says it is absolutely critical. "We will not be able to immunize infants younger

than six months, so the only way to protect them is for them to receive antibodies through their mother's breastmilk.”

In order for mothers to be able to breastfeed for a longer period after birth, and provide good nutrition and immune protection for their babies for a longer period of time, they need the support of the entire community. From lactation support through their healthcare providers to breastfeeding accommodation when they return to work or school, all these factors have shown to influence the ability of mothers to continue breastfeeding.

For more information on statewide activities celebrating Breastfeeding Awareness, go to <http://www.calwic.org/bfwalk.aspx> . For information about breastfeeding, go to www.calwic.org.

For additional information about the local events, contact Samantha Pfeifer, Breastfeeding Coordinator for the Yolo County WIC Program, at the Yolo County Health Department at (530) 666-8645.

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