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HPSJ SALUTES SAN JOAQUIN GENERAL HOSPITAL (SJGH) AS NOW ONE OF ONLY THREE LOCAL HOSPITALS TO EARN THE COVETED BABY-FRIENDLY DESIGNATION

(French Camp, CA) – San Joaquin General Hospital (SJGH) has now capped a decade-long journey to be recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) as a Baby-Friendly Hospital. SJGH recently joined the only two other San Joaquin County hospitals to have earned this designation: **Dignity Health – St. Joseph’s Medical Center** (awarded in 2012) and **Lodi Memorial Hospital** (awarded in 2014). Out of the eight counties of California’s Central Valley, San Joaquin County is one of only two to be home to Baby-Friendly hospitals; only 81 California hospitals have earned this designation.

Baby-Friendly birthing places worldwide take special steps to make a setting for parents and infants that ensures the best start for breastfeeding.

What does this mean for babies and parents?

- They will be given support to start nursing within one hour of birth.
- They will be encouraged to stay together with baby during their hospital stay (called rooming-in).
- They will be shown how to breastfeed and to keep making milk if they have to be away from baby.
- Bonding with baby right after birth for at least an hour through skin-to-skin contact.
- Free pacifiers will not be routinely supplied.

“It really does take a village” both before, during and after birth, said SJGH Chief of Pediatrics **Dr. Mamta Jain** to the guests gathered May 23, 2016 to celebrate the Baby-Friendly designation, from hospital staff (including nurses, doctors, administrators and SJGH senior leadership), to Community Medical Centers (CMC), First 5 San Joaquin, San Joaquin County Public Health Services, the Public Health Breastfeeding Initiative, and HPSJ, among others.

The path to being designated a Baby-Friendly hospital is rigorous, long-term and sustainable, and requires teamwork and commitment. It took ten years, and the bottom-to-top commitment, resourcefulness and resilience of SJGH personnel – working with parents and community organizations, to effect cultural change sufficient to turn the hospital into a successful model of baby-friendly culture.

Here is how SJGH describes the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) –

BFHI is a global program that was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in 1991 to encourage and recognize hospitals and birthing centers that offer an optimal level of care for infant feeding and mother/baby bonding. It recognizes and

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awards birthing facilities who successfully implement the **Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes**. The BFHI assists hospitals in giving all mothers the information, confidence, and skills necessary to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding their babies or feeding formula safely, and gives special recognition to hospitals that have done so.

According to [Baby-Friendly USA](#), “The gold standard of care” –

The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding were developed by a team of global experts and consist of evidence-based practices that have been shown to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration. Baby-Friendly hospitals and birthing facilities must adhere to the Ten Steps to receive, and retain, a Baby-Friendly designation.

The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding are:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in the skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation, even if they are separated from their infants.
6. Give infants no food or drink other than breast-milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming in - allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or birth center.

About HPSJ

HPSJ, a not-for-profit health plan, has been serving members and the community since 1996. Located in the heart of California’s multicultural Central Valley, HPSJ is the leading Medi-Cal Managed Care provider in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties. HPSJ offers a broad network of providers and works closely with physicians to develop programs and services to ensure quality health care for more than 330,000 members – over 192,000 of whom are children.

A new HPSJ Prenatal/Postpartum Program, to be launched this spring by Health Plan of San Joaquin, will provide health education information to members, providers, community-based organizations, Maternal Child Adolescent Health (MCAH) programs, and surrounding prenatal and postpartum health services, as well as resources for support and partnerships.

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