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**EXCELA HEALTH RECOGNIZED ON HEPATITIS B BIRTH DOSE HONOR ROLL**

**GREENSBURG, PA, August, 31 2018** ... The best way to protect newborn babies from Hepatitis B is vaccination. Excela Health and the Family Additions Maternity Center at Westmoreland Hospital provide Hepatitis B vaccinations to newborns within hours of delivery. Through this patient safety initiative, the hospital has been recognized by the Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) on its nationwide honor roll. Excela Health Westmoreland Hospital is one of 407 hospitals in the United States to achieve this distinction, with a 91% reported hepatitis B birth vaccine coverage rate from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017.

Each year an estimated 22,000 infants are born to women in the United States who are infected with the Hepatitis B virus. The perinatal transmission of the Hepatitis B virus poses a serious threat to infants, potentially leading to chronic infection.

On July 16, 2013, the IAC launched the Hepatitis B Birth Dose Honor Roll. The Honor Roll recognizes hospitals and birthing centers that have attained high coverage rates for administering the Hepatitis B vaccine at birth.

The Hepatitis B virus can enter the bloodstream, attack the liver and cause serious damage. When newborns are infected, the virus usually remains in the body for a lifetime (this is called chronic Bepatitis B). According to the CDC, 780,000 people die each year from Hepatitis B complications. The Hepatitis B virus is spread by contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids.

The Excela Health Pharmacy offers families booster shots for tetanus, diphtheria, flu, and pertussis (whooping cough) as part of newborn care in the Family Additions

Maternity Center. The program was started in March 2013 as a part of the health system sponsored childbirth education classes .

To view the complete list of hospital and birthing centers on the Honor Roll visit: <http://www.immunize.org/honor-roll/birthdose/honorees.asp> and to learn more about the Family Additions Maternity Center visit: <https://www.excelahealth.org/Services/Women-Childrens-Care/Maternity-Care-Obstetrics>.