

TO MEDIA:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EXCELA HEALTH FAMILY ADDITIONS MATERNITY CENTER RECOGNIZED
FOR ACHIEVING HIGHEST STANDARDS IN BREASTFEEDING**

GREENSBURG, Pa., December 30, 2019 ... The Family Additions Maternity Center at Excelsa Health is one of 20 birthing centers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and one of only two in the Southwest Region to have met the evidence-based quality measures to be recognized by the Department of Health with Keystone 10 honors.

The Keystone 10 Initiative began in March 2015 as a quality improvement breastfeeding initiative that engages Pennsylvania birthing facilities in efforts to improve the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding, and ultimately improve the health of mothers and babies.

To meet the standards successfully, Excelsa Health's maternal-child care team implemented the 10-step program that began with a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all healthcare staff and includes education for pregnant mothers about the benefits and management of breastfeeding; help in initiating breastfeeding within one hour of birth; the promotion of "rooming-in", which keeps mothers and their newborns together 24 hours a day; and post-discharge breastfeeding support, among other measures.

The Family Additions Maternity Center has four nurses who are board certified lactation consultants. Beyond their care at the bedside, they also conduct breastfeeding support groups within the Excelsa Health OB/GYN physician practice, and offer one-on-one guidance to pregnant women as well as new mothers.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, among others, strongly recommend **breastfeeding** exclusively for six months, and continuing for at least a year with the introduction of other foods.

Breast milk contains antibodies that help the baby fight off viruses and bacteria.

Breastfeeding lowers a baby's risk of having asthma or allergies. Plus, babies who are breastfed exclusively for the first six months, without any formula, have fewer **ear infections**, respiratory illnesses, and bouts of **diarrhea**. They also have fewer hospitalizations and trips to the doctor.

To learn more about The Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Awareness and Support Program, visit www.health.state.pa.us/breastfeeding