

WABASHA COUNTY BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKPLACE THE JOURNEY

Wabasha County values good health in its community members, including its youngest. That's why, in the fall of 2017, the Wabasha County Wellness Committee, in collaboration with Wabasha County SHIP and Maternal Child Health, decided it was important to support its breastfeeding mothers. One way to do this was to apply for a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace designation through the Minnesota Department of Health.



First steps: a committee was formed to identify current and future breastfeeding areas, and it was determined there should be breastfeeding rooms available in the county courthouse, criminal justice building and the service building. Space was found in each building and the group received the necessary funds to provide the rooms with the furniture and supplies needed. The rooms are available to all county staff who are breastfeeding, and several have been using the rooms and comment on how clean and comfortable the rooms are. They also appreciate the willingness of the county to go this extra mile so they can continue breastfeeding after they return to work.

Next: the committee reviewed the breast feeding policies used by Goodhue County and used that as a template to guide creation of a Breastfeeding Friendly policy. It took six months, but the county board of commissioners approved the policy and the changes, and then the rooms were open for business.

Finally, the committee worked as a group to fill out the State Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Recognition form, sent it on January 12, 2018, and we are now pleased to announce that Wabasha County has received the MDH designation for a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.

The Minnesota Department of Health and Wabasha County understand the importance of breastfeeding babies for the first year, if possible. Studies show breastfeeding is important to the health of babies and their moms, with lower rates of ear infections, colds and other ailments in the baby. You can read more about the benefits of breastfeeding at the Minnesota Department of Health website here: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/bf/