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DHHR Announces New Breastfeeding Support App for WIC Participants

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), Bureau for Public Health is working to improve nutrition for babies and mothers with Pacify, an app that provides 24/7 breastfeeding support for participants of the West Virginia Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). West Virginia WIC is the fifth WIC program in the nation to launch the free app.

Pacify provides access to International Board Certified Lactation Consultants to address questions and concerns about breastfeeding. All current pregnant and breastfeeding mothers receiving WIC benefits are encouraged to visit their local WIC clinic to gain access to this new resource. WIC staff will help participants download the app, complete a sample test call and provide additional information.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics and other health officials, breastfeeding is a fantastic sole source of nutrition for babies. It is recommended for the first 6 months of life followed by continued breastfeeding as complementary (solid) foods are introduced, with continued breastfeeding for 1 year or longer as desired by both mother and baby. Breastfeeding rates in West Virginia are below the national average and increased support may be one way to help more West Virginia mothers and babies breastfeed and to do so longer.

“Our goal is to provide nutrition and breastfeeding services and information that empower individuals and keep West Virginia families healthy,” said Dr. Catherine Slep, State Health Officer and Commissioner of DHHR’s Bureau for Public Health. “Currently, West Virginia WIC serves nearly 35,000 mothers and young children monthly. With the Pacify app, we can now offer around-the-clock live support to help WIC moms breastfeed.”

West Virginia WIC serves 75% of all babies born in West Virginia. Families enrolled in the program receive nutrition education, breastfeeding education, nutritious foods, support and access to maternal, prenatal and pediatric healthcare services that may otherwise be unavailable.

For more information about West Virginia WIC, visit dhr.wv.gov/wic or call (304) 558-0030.

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