



**Alameda County Health Care Services Agency  
Public Health Department**

**Community Health Services - WIC**

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Oakland, CA 94609**

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Dear Alameda County Health Care Providers,

One of the most effective ways a mother protects the health of her baby and herself is by breastfeeding; and health care professionals and the Alameda County Public Health Department can help.

Increased rates of breastfeeding, higher levels of maternal satisfaction, and a higher level of professional knowledge and skills are reported by physicians with training in lactation skills and/or collaborative management with other health care professionals and certified breastfeeding counselors.<sup>1</sup> The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists encourage all physicians to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for providing anticipatory guidance, assessment and management of breastfeeding.<sup>2,3</sup>

Physicians who are ambivalent about promoting breastfeeding as the norm for infant feeding have a negative impact on breastfeeding outcomes and are predictive of breastfeeding failure by 6 weeks postpartum.<sup>4,5</sup>

Alameda County Public Health Department can assist with removing barriers to breastfeeding and to breastfeeding support systems for both families *and* their health care providers. Optimal breastfeeding support requires knowledge, skills and coordination with available community resources to ensure all breastfeeding couplets have the vital care they need. This may include referral to a certified lactation consultant, peer support groups, outpatient breastfeeding services and health-care systems.<sup>6</sup> The [Alameda County Breastfeeding Referral Guide](#) offers state of the art assessment tools and up-to-date resource information to meet your lactation referral needs.

Together we can create sustainable systems to support all women, especially low-income and minority women, and their families to access vital guidance and timely care. Resources such as the [California 9 Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly: Guidelines for Community Health Centers and Outpatient Care Settings](#), [California Breastfeeding Model Hospital Policy Recommendations](#), and the [WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative](#) are a few of the evidence-based quality care frameworks facilitating system changes here in our County and across the State. In addition, Alameda County facilitates technical assistance and trainings through the [WIC Regional Breastfeeding Liaison](#) program and excellent resources provided through this website. We welcome your questions and partnership in developing quality coordinated breastfeeding care so that all families may meet their breastfeeding goals and achieve the very best start in life.

Thank you for your partnership and your efforts to provide outstanding care to moms and babies in Alameda County.

Sincerely,

Erica Pan, MD, MPH, FAAP  
County Health Officer

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