



**BERRIEN COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
better health. stronger communities.

## News Release

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For Immediate Release

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### **4<sup>th</sup> Annual “Breastfeeding on the Bluff ” Event to Celebrate Breastfeeding in Berrien County**

(Berrien County, MI) - The Berrien County Health Department, in partnership with the Berrien County Breastfeeding Coalition, will host the 4<sup>th</sup> annual “Breastfeeding on the Bluff” event occurring on Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> starting at 9:30AM in Lake Bluff Park across the St. Joseph Public Library in St. Joseph, Michigan.

The “Breastfeeding on the Bluff” event taking place on August 3<sup>rd</sup> is part of the “2019 Global Big Latch On”, a global breastfeeding awareness celebration, where moms across the globe are linked in simultaneous breastfeeding, which occurs annually during World Breastfeeding Week (August 1-7). Mothers, fathers, families and breastfeeding supporters can start arriving at 9:30am for registration, before the “Big Latch On” occurs at 10:30am. Breastfeeding support education and resources, gifts for moms, face painting for kids, a photo booth, and refreshments for the whole family will be provided. Transportation to the event is also available and can be reserved by calling the Berrien County Health Department.

The Berrien County Breastfeeding Coalition has a mission to provide support for the community by identifying and growing opportunities for on-going breastfeeding support and promotion, normalizing breastfeeding in the community, and ensure that families have the resources needed to have a successful breastfeeding relationship. The Coalition has membership and support from a variety of community organizations, such as Lakeland Health, InterCare Community Health Network, and Michigan State University Extension, as well as representation from breastfeeding mothers and advocates.

“This event is an opportunity to celebrate and support all breastfeeding families in Berrien County and encourage the community support of breastfeeding as a natural part of day-to-day life,” said Mistel de Varona, breastfeeding peer counselor coordinator at the Berrien County Health Department. In Michigan, 80% of moms initiate breastfeeding after birth; however, at 6 months of age, only 26% of babies are still exclusively breastfed. The American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization recommend at least six months of exclusive breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding has been proven to have countless health benefits for mothers and babies, as well as long-term positive public health impacts throughout the community. As of 2014, Michigan mothers who nurse their children in public are protected from discrimination and prosecution under bipartisan legislation signed into law by Governor Rick Snyder. The “Breastfeeding Anti-Discrimination Act” gives

women the right to nurse a child in any place that is open to the general public, including stores, restaurants and municipal buses.

More information can be found at [www.facebook.com/berriencountybreastfeedingcoalition](https://www.facebook.com/berriencountybreastfeedingcoalition) or by calling 269-926-7121.

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