

GAUTENG HEALTH COMMEMORATES BREASTFEEDING WEEK

In an effort to reduce growth of chronic conditions and ensure healthy development of babies in the province, the Gauteng Department of Health has this week joined the world in commemorating World Breastfeeding Week.

Under the theme ***Breastfeeding: a key to a sustainable development***, the World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) which runs annually from 1 to 7 August saw the Department educating expectant and new mothers on the benefits of breast milk in all public health facilities across the province.

The Department presently has two fully functional Human Breast Milk Banks at Kalafong Tertiary and Steve Biko Academic Hospitals.

Furthermore, the Department has four active collection sites in Dr George Mukhari, Far East Rand, Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic and Rahima Moosa Hospitals.

Leratong Regional Hospital has also recently purchased a new human milk pasteurizer which will be running in due course.

Commenting on the efforts that the Department is embarking on to ensure sufficient breast milk in the province, MEC Qedani Mahlangu said “Establishing more human banks in more facilities will help in the availability of human milk for the management of the infants that might need it. Six facilities have been identified for installation of human milk pasteurizers in the 2017/18 financial year. These facilities are Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic, Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic, Rahima Moosa, Sebokeng, Dr George Mkhari and Thelle Mogoerane Hospitals, which will increase the number of established Human Milk banks to nine in the Province,”

Exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding for two years and beyond is encouraged to help provide babies and kids with quality nutrients and adequate energy without putting any financial strains on a household budget.

All five Districts in the Province will tomorrow 05 August 2016 embark on the “**BIG LATCH**” where mothers in all public health facilities will be latching at the same time, from 10h30 to 11h00 together with other mothers globally as an initiative from World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA). This exercise will help mothers to offer peer support to each other and also protect, promote and support breastfeeding within their communities.