



# Indian Health Service Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## IHS Zuni Health Center Achieves Baby-Friendly Status

The Indian Health Service's Zuni Comprehensive Community Health Center is the sixth IHS facility and the first hospital in New Mexico to be certified as Baby-Friendly. Baby-Friendly hospitals offer new mothers the information, confidence, and skills they need to initiate and continue breastfeeding their babies.



These designations were sought as part of the IHS Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. This initiative is part of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move! in Indian Country" campaign dedicated to solving childhood obesity and reducing diabetes rates within a generation. It promotes breastfeeding to reduce the risk that children will develop obesity and diabetes in the future. The IHS campaign aims to certify all IHS obstetric facilities as Baby-Friendly. It also illustrates the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' dedication to the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding.

The Zuni Comprehensive Community Health Center completed the designation process in November and has a 95 percent breastfeeding initiation rate. As part of the Baby-Friendly process, hospital staff members are trained to support breastfeeding and teach new mothers how to nurse.

Nationally, barely 7 percent of all U.S. hospitals are designated as Baby-Friendly. However, as a result of the IHS Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative's commitment to the Surgeon General's call to "Accelerate implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative," disparities in access to Baby-Friendly care are disappearing faster than ever. The 20 percent increase in the number of states with at least one Baby-Friendly hospital is unprecedented. Mothers in all but 10 states have access to a Baby-Friendly hospital. The first ever Baby-Friendly designated hospitals in Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, North Dakota, and South Dakota are all IHS facilities and were all designated in the last 12 months. This initiative illustrates the powerful improvements that are possible through dedicated and coordinated efforts across federal agencies and their non-governmental partners.

Co-administered by the World Health Organization and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is an evidence-based practice care model designed to protect and promote breastfeeding as the safest, healthiest way to nourish babies. Hospitals that achieve Baby-Friendly status are committed to promoting and protecting breastfeeding at all stages, including prenatal counseling, inpatient services, and community awareness.

The IHS, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, is the principal federal health care advocate and provider for American Indian and Alaska Native people. It provides preventive, curative, and community health care to approximately 2.1 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in hospitals, clinics, and other settings throughout the country.