Hospitals encourage breastfeeding

By Stephanie Wright & Katherine Hall

The University of Washington Medical Center has become the 11th hospital in the region to receive the international designation of a Baby-Friendly birth facility. The Baby Friendly program, sponsored by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), recognizes health care facilities that encourage breastfeeding.

This designation, based on the "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding," recognizes efforts to help mothers and babies become more successful at breastfeeding. "Breastfeeding matters to nearly every aspect of health and well-being for infants and families, and exclusive breastfeeding is the ideal." said Isabella Knox, UW associate professor of pediatrics.

More than 19,000 health care facilities around the globe have received the Baby-Friendly designation, including 85 hospitals and birth centers in the United States. Those in our region are: Community Hospital of Anaconda, Anaconda, Montana; Evergreen Hospital Medical Center, Kirkland, Washington; Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center, Clackamas, Oregon; Kootenai Medical Center, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Okanogan-Douglas District Hospital, Brewster, Washington; PeaceHealth Nurse Midwifery Birth Center, Eugene, Oregon; Alaska; Providence Alaska Medical Center, Anchorage, Alaska; Providence Medford Medical Center, Medford, Oregon; Tacoma General Hospital, Tacoma, Washington; and Three Rivers Community Hospital, Grants Pass, Oregon; in addition to the UW Medical Center, Seattle, Washington. ■

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New mom, Rosa Mondragon, breastfeeds in the postpartum unit of UW Medical Center. Monica Hines photo.

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