



Media Brief

“Hospitals running for breastfeeding friendly tag to support mothers”

Two private hospitals; Rainbow Children’s Hospital – Bangalore, Karnataka and Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Mother and Child Hospital, Chhattisgarh and a government hospital; Mother and Children Hospital, Kamareddy, Telangana get accreditation as "Breastfeeding Friendly".

New Delhi 17 February 2023. It is crucial for a pregnant mother to find a hospital that will assist her with initiation of breastfeeding within an hour of giving birth and provide skin-to-skin contact with the baby. This step ensures good bonding, immediate temperature control, better success at breastfeeding and both short and long-term positive health impacts for the mother and child both.

The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) www.bpni.org and the Association of Healthcare Providers of India (AHPI) <https://ahpi.in/> jointly run this programme to certify maternity hospitals as "Breastfeeding Friendly" based on [WHO’s Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding](#). The [‘National Accreditation Centre \(NAC\) for Breastfeeding Friendly Hospitals’](#) facilitates assessment and accreditation process. Standards have been field-tested, validated and approved by the TAG of the Government of India. The National Accreditation Center also handholds the staff and offers technical guidance in order to achieve success for every mom whether giving birth by vaginal or caesarean routes.

Being “Breastfeeding Friendly” is a chance for a maternity hospital to highlight the best standard of care of breastfeeding mothers.

According to Dr. Arun Gupta, Pediatrician who developed this initiative and has spent more than three decades striving to increase breastfeeding in India, ‘Breastfeeding Friendly Hospital Initiative’ can significantly impact early breastfeeding rates as we observe that more mothers with C-section are now able to breastfeed successfully in the hospital with in an hour of birth. Therefore, this inexpensive but effective work can be a game changer if more hospitals come forward. It is not a pass or fail situation, we in fact help the hospital to achieve best possible standards in a few months. They can then continue to monitor themselves.”

More than 100 hospitals, both Government and Private, have registered so far and more than 40 hospitals have completed the first step that is self -assessment. In total 7 hospitals are now accredited as Breastfeeding Friendly and have receive their certificates valid for 3 years. <https://www.bfhi-india.in/list-of-enrolled-hospitals> and <https://www.bfhi-india.in/list-of-accredited-hospitals>

According to Ms. Reema Dutta, a Programme Officer for BFHI-NAC, "NFHS-5 data of India shows that nearly 88.6% mothers give institutional births, Birth attended by Skilled Health Personnel is 89.4%. However, rate of breastfed within one hour of birth is only 41.8% which clearly shows a huge gap in supporting moms our health systems. This initiative helps to bridge this gap."

The Minister of Medical-Health and Finance Department of Telangana Sh.Harish Rao Thanneeru today took twitter to laud BFHI accreditation given to Banswada Mother and Children Hospital by BPNI &AHPI and partners. He encouraged the doctors and maternity staff for implementing WHO's ten steps to successful breastfeeding and guidance of MAA programme. The tweet could be found here <https://twitter.com/BRSHarish/status/1626533240977899520?t=WE6iVKSyWs75knt6AtENJw&s=08>

Following the hospital's accreditation, Dr. Shruti Prabhu, Head of Public Health at Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Mother & Child Hospital in Chhattisgarh, "As health care providers it is our prime duty to help our patients initiate breastfeeding during the hospital stay. The BFHI accreditation process is a scientific approach to implement key processes in maternity hospitals. I thank the BPNI team for their support throughout the process. With the accreditation, our staff is trained & oriented to the best practices to be followed during postnatal follow up and we are better equipped in providing the best care to our patients, majority of them coming from underprivileged communities".

According to Dr. Vikram V, Unit Head at Rainbow Children's Hospital in Bangalore which recently received the accreditation, - "It was indeed an overwhelming support we received from Team BFHI. Through this collaboration our nursing staff are well-trained in breastfeeding and achieved readiness to handle all new mothers in ensuring appropriate breastfeeding practices. Accreditation process was smooth & we received timely guidance on implementing various breastfeeding operational challenges. Now we have set quality standards & good clinical practices we stand out among other pediatric hospitals. Our lactation consultant is pleased that her efforts are recognized with this certification & she promises to ensure 100% compliance in implementing BFHI guidelines in our system."

The 2023 Lancet Series on breastfeeding <https://www.thelancet.com/series/Breastfeeding-2023> has highlighted that women needed utmost support during their hospital stay and during pregnancy to prepare for breastfeeding other than controlling bad marketing of baby foods. Both

these issues are well covered in the accreditation process and hospitals are led to integrate Ten Steps. “...the **Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative** can provide an important springboard for multilevel and multicomponent interventions that involve the engagement of community and individual families.” Nupur Bidla, BPNI’s national coordinator says “Breastfeeding Friendly Hospital Initiative is an effective strategy and calls upon all government and private maternity hospitals to aspire for best standards of care and contribute to national health. She urged more hospitals to step forward and bring about the much- needed structural changes to increase breastfeeding rates”.

Ends

Contact:

Dr. Arun Gupta, 9899676306 arun.ibfan@gmail.com

Dr. Girdhar Gyani DG AHPI, 98107 30040

gyani@ahpi.in

Ms. Reema Dutta, 9354217803 reema@bpni.org

Ms.Nupur Bidla , 9958163610 nupurbidla@gmail.com

Notes for Editors

1. Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India

<https://www.bpni.org/>

2. Association of Healthcare Providers of India

<https://www.ahpi.in/>

3. 'National Accreditation Centre (NAC) for Breastfeeding Friendly Hospitals'

<https://www.bfhi-india.in/home.php>

4. NFHS-5 Data

http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-5_FCTS/India.pdf

5. The 2023 Lancet Series on breastfeeding

<https://www.thelancet.com/series/Breastfeeding-2023>

