

DC Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 20, 2009

CONTACT: Dr. Sahira Long, DCBFC  
202-470-2732 or slong@dcbfc.org

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NAMED MOST BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY FACILITY IN WASHINGTON, DC FOR 2008.**

City-wide survey finds that Georgetown University Hospital has the most breastfeeding-friendly website, policies and practices.

Washington, DC -The DC Breastfeeding Coalition (DCBFC) will recognize Georgetown University Hospital (GUH) as the most breastfeeding-friendly birthing facility in the District on February 12, 2009 at the GUH in Washington, DC. The hospital will be honored for its commitment to promote breastfeeding through policies and practices that support breastfeeding families.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the World Health Organization all recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life because of its numerous medical, psychological and economic benefits. The Surgeon General's goal for Healthy People 2010 is to increase the initiation rate and duration of breastfeeding to 75% postpartum, 50% at 6 months, and 25% at 1 year. According to data from the CDC, the 2008 breastfeeding rates for the District were 70%, 47% and 26%, respectively. GUH reported initiation rates of at least 90%.

Healthy People 2010 also aims to improve breastfeeding exclusivity rates to 40% at 3 months and 17% at 6 months. DC fell far short of this goal in 2008 with rates of 28% and 9%, respectively. Studies have shown that when women deliver at health care facilities that encourage, support and promote breastfeeding, they are more likely to initiate breastfeeding and to breastfeed for a longer duration. To determine which District birthing facility is the most breastfeeding friendly, the DCBFC launched the DC Breastfeeding Friendly Hospital Initiative during World Breastfeeding Week 2008. The project is funded by the Office of Women's Health of the Department of Health & Human Services. Each of the eight maternity service facilities in Washington, DC agreed to participate. The DCBFC reviewed each facility's written breastfeeding policy, interviewed individuals within each facility about the breastfeeding practices and policies of the organization and conducted an in-depth survey of each facility's web site. Data analysis identified Georgetown University Hospital as the highest ranking and most breastfeeding friendly facility among those evaluated.

-more-

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL WINS AWARD (page 2)

“Breastfeeding is a proven benefit for mothers, babies and society. Breastfeeding-friendly hospitals with policies and practices that promote and support breastfeeding help increase the breastfeeding initiation and duration rates in the District,” said Dr. Sahira Long, President of the DC Breastfeeding Coalition. “Increasing breastfeeding rates improves maternal and child health in our community. Georgetown should be extremely proud of the success of their lactation program. While this award does not designate the hospital as Baby-Friendly, we relied heavily on the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding in the creation of our survey tools.”

The next component of the project will be a collaborative education program at each participating facility with a review of the facility’s strengths and challenges in regards to breastfeeding. The Coalition will offer guidance and support to those facilities desiring to become more breastfeeding friendly. The education programs will be conducted over the next several months after which the facilities will undergo a post-intervention evaluation to measure interval progress. The Coalition plans to release the results for 2009 during World Breastfeeding Week.

*The DC Breastfeeding Coalition, established in 2004, is a non-profit organization ([www.dcbfc.org](http://www.dcbfc.org)) dedicated to enhancing the health of families in the District through improved breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. It is the Coalitions’ goal to promote environments that establish human lactation as a societal norm.*

# # #