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**For Immediate Release**

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## **ST. VINCENT'S FIRST IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY TO EARN BABY-FRIENDLY™ DESIGNATION**

BRIDGEPORT, CT, July 20, 2010—St. Vincent's Medical Center has become the first hospital in Fairfield County and only the third in the state to receive the designation as a Baby-Friendly™ Hospital by the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) through their global Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI). Only 3% of hospitals nationally have received the designation.

“We're delighted to have St. Vincent's be the first BFHI-designated hospital in Fairfield County,” said Chairperson of OB/GYN and Director of Maternal and Fetal Medicine William Cusick, MD, who along with Women's Health and Family Birthing Center (FBC) Director Nina Hyde, APRN, FNP, provided support for the long-term project. “This is yet another example of the commitment and dedication of St. Vincent's FBC team to provide the safest and best care for mothers and their babies.”

The *Baby-Friendly* concept grew out of studies showing that breastfeeding in infancy promotes good health throughout life. *Baby-Friendly hospitals* provide guidance in helping parents to make informed choices about how to feed and care for their babies. Babies in the FBC remain in the mother's room (rooming in) throughout their stay to make it easier to learn about baby's feeding cues and to promote mother-infant bonding.

However, for premature infants or those with problems, St. Vincent's has a fully equipped Special Care Nursery and two neonatologists, or pediatricians specializing in the care of premature newborns or those needing intensive care and monitoring, covering 24/7.

At St. Vincent's, experienced nursing staff encourage “skin to skin” care, a best practice that encourages contact between mother and baby. This, along with the practice of rooming in, adds to the new parents' confidence in caring for their newborn, and also gives the birthing unit a quiet and serene atmosphere. “Babies are happiest when with their moms,” said Hyde.

Baby-Friendly hospitals ensure the highest level of care in infant nutrition education, mother-infant bonding, and confidence-building in the parenting process. As part of its journey to attain BFHI, the Family Birthing Center offers baby care classes, childbirth preparation and breastfeeding classes, expectant parent and sibling tours, infant massage and mother-baby support groups.

The FBC encourages breastfeeding within the first hour of life and thereafter exclusively until breastfeeding is well established. Families enjoy full time 24/7 lactation (breastfeeding) support and instruction from consultants Jennifer Matranga, RN, IBCLC, and Laurie Mastrone, RNC, IBCLC, and nurses highly trained on all feeding and parenting practices. A breast pump rental and supplies store is available and offers another level of convenience to the new mother.

Also signaling its leadership in the promotion of infant nutrition best practices, the FBC team's electronic medical record developed to track breastfeeding statistics has been selected by the United States Breastfeeding Committee to aid hospitals across the nation in data collection.

The success in achieving the Baby Friendly designation involved changing the traditional approach to caring for newborns strictly in a nursery. "Our full-time lactation consultants along with obstetricians, pediatricians and nurses, have created a unique 'culture of caring' environment for moms and babies, and one that reflects St. Vincent's Baby-Friendly team approach," according to Hyde

*For more information on the Baby Friendly designation, please call the Lactation Consultants at 203-576-6087 or visit [www.stvincents.org](http://www.stvincents.org).*