

Aug. 17, 2016

DOH-PINELLAS MARKS BLACK BREASTFEEDING WEEK ON AUG. 25



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The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) is marking the Fourth Annual Black Breastfeeding Week with activities from 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM on Thursday, Aug. 25 at its St. Petersburg center, 205 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N.

The event celebrates African-American women who are breastfeeding and who want to encourage others to do so. DOH-Pinellas will be screening the mini-documentary *Chocolate Milk* during the event. It focuses on the history and present movement of black breastfeeding.

For information about the documentary, go to <http://www.chocolatemilkdoc.com/>. Snacks will be provided during the screenings; everyone is invited to attend.

Black Breastfeeding Week started as a nationwide movement in 2012 to bring awareness to the special barriers and concerns that African-American mothers face. Infant mortality is higher in African-American babies and many cultural and economic issues contribute to that disparity. Breastfeeding is one way to bridge the gap of health differences because of the many benefits breastfeeding provides to mothers and babies.

In Pinellas, about 78 percent of new mothers initiate breastfeeding. Among African-American mothers, the initiation rate is 68 percent. Many of the mothers who start breastfeeding switch to formula soon after birth due to lack of support from health-care and child-care providers, employers, friends and family. After six months, about 30 percent are still breastfeeding.

For information about the DOH-Pinellas event, contact Grace Peterson at (727) 824-6900, ext. 4675, or via email at Grace.Peterson@FLHealth.gov.

For more information about the national celebration of Black Breastfeeding Week, go to www.blackbreastfeedingweek.org.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to www.PinellasHealth.com. Follow us on Twitter @HealthyPinellas.

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