

World Breastfeeding Week 2023 calls for community collaboration to support breastfeeding (with photos)

â€‹To echo World Breastfeeding Week 2023, the Department of Health (DH) today (July 28) called for community collaboration to support and promote breastfeeding.

World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated annually in the first week of August. The theme for this year is "Enabling breastfeeding: Making a difference for working parents", which aims to support working women to continue breastfeeding. The DH, in collaboration with the Hospital Authority (HA), the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Hong Kong Association and the Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF, today held a celebration event for World Breastfeeding Week 2023, to raise the awareness of breastfeeding among the community and call for their support.

Speaking at the event, the Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, said that the Government has been actively promoting the Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace policy. As at June this year, there are over 380 baby care facilities in government properties. Meanwhile, the DH launched guidelines for employers and employees on specific recommendations to support breastfeeding and encouraged workplaces to implement breastfeeding-friendly measures.

Dr Lee said that professional support from healthcare institutions helps enhance parents' awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding. The DH and the HA have actively implemented the Baby-Friendly Healthcare Facility accreditation programme in their respective maternal and child health centres and hospitals with maternity service with a view to strengthening professional support to breastfeeding mothers. The local breastfeeding rate has been on a rise over the past 20 years. The breastfeeding rate on hospital discharge has increased from 55 per cent in 2000 to 85 per cent in 2022. The rate of exclusive breastfeeding till six months of age also increased from 8 per cent in 2000 to 22 per cent in 2020.

However, Dr Lee pointed out that during the COVID-19 pandemic, women encountered difficulties in obtaining adequate and appropriate breastfeeding information and counselling service as well as support from healthcare institutions and in the community. Following the full resumption to normalcy after the pandemic, all sectors of the community should spare no effort in supporting and promoting breastfeeding.

To further promote breastfeeding-friendly workplace, the DH has produced a new promotional video to be broadcast on TV starting next month, so as to reinforce the relevant message to employers. The DH will also launch a large-scale promotional campaign next month with a view to creating a supportive

environment for sustained breastfeeding.

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Members of the public can visit the designated webpage (www.fhs.gov.hk/wbw2023/index.html) for more information on World Breastfeeding Week 2023.

