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NEWS RELEASE

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MONROE COUNTY AND CITY OF ROCHESTER RECOGNIZED AS LACTATION-FRIENDLY WORKSITES

*Annual Monroe County and Jordan Health WIC Breastfeeding Celebration
highlights progress toward more equitable, family-friendly workplaces*

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello and Rochester Mayor Malik Evans today announced that Monroe County and the City of Rochester have been officially recognized as Lactation-Friendly Worksites, reinforcing their shared commitment to supporting working parents and promoting healthier outcomes for families. The designation was announced during the Annual Monroe County and Jordan Health WIC Breastfeeding Celebration at Ellison Park's Sycamore Shelter.

"We are dedicated to fostering a supportive workplace culture that recognizes the needs of all employees," **said Monroe County Executive Adam Bello**. "By improving our lactation spaces and updating our policies, we are ensuring that parents returning to work have the tools they need to care for their families while continuing to serve our community."

"The City of Rochester is proud to stand alongside Monroe County in creating workplaces that truly support working parents," **said City of Rochester Mayor Malik Evans**. "By ensuring our employees have the time, space and resources to continue breastfeeding after returning to work, we're fostering a culture of health, equity and respect. These investments strengthen our workforce, our families and ultimately, our entire community."

The recognition comes from the University of Rochester Public Health Sciences Department through a grant from the Breastfeeding, Chestfeeding and Lactation Friendly NY (BFFNY) program from the New York State Department of Health. It reflects significant upgrades to lactation spaces across County and City worksites, including comfortable seating, calming lighting, and access to privacy signage and electrical outlets.

“Breastfeeding protects both babies and parents. It lowers the risk of illness in infants and reduces the likelihood of chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure for parents,” said **Monroe County Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Marielena Vélez de Brown**. “But access to breastfeeding support is not equal. Nationally, only 19 percent of Black infants and 24 percent of Latino infants are exclusively breastfed at six months, compared to 27 percent of white infants. These disparities are often not about personal choice—they’re about access, time, space, and support. That’s why creating lactation-friendly workplaces matters. It’s a step toward equity, and it’s a proven public health strategy.”

Monroe County and the City of Rochester earned their designations by completing a structured process led by the University of Rochester and NYSDOH that included policy assessments, space upgrades, and employee education. Both municipalities now offer designated lactation rooms that meet or exceed state requirements.

Monroe County also recently revised its lactation policy to exceed New York State Labor Law Section 206-c. The updated policy ensures not only access to private space but also provides paid break time for nursing parents. The revised policy took effect in June 2024.

For more information on lactation-friendly workplace practices and local support resources, visit: <https://www.rochesterregionalbreastfeedingcoalition.com>.

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