



03.11.2008

PRESS RELEASE

BREAST-FEEDING: A TOP PRIORITY

LETO to offer the 1st Training Workshop on Breast-feeding for Health Professionals

To celebrate the **World Breast-feeding Week**, LETO maternity hospital offers the **1st training workshop to prepare breast-feeding trainers** under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and in collaboration with the Hellenic Association of Midwives.

Following the propositions of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the workshop is held **from November 3rd through November 7th, 2008 at the Lecture Room of Leto Maternity Hospital** and is intended for all midwives, paediatricians and obstetricians.

“LETO maternity hospital is the first private maternity hospital in Greece that has managed to strictly apply 7 out of the 10 breast-feeding steps defined by WHO and UNICEF. Significant progress has been made on the other 3 steps. I expect that it will not be long before we can proceed to certify LETO as a “Baby-Friendly Hospital”, announced Mr. Theofanis Stathis, BoD Chairman of the maternity hospital at the opening ceremony of the workshop held on Monday, November 3rd at LETO.

“Besides, the objective of the workshop is to train health professionals and raise the level of public awareness about developing a single policy for promoting, advancing and supporting breast-feeding in our country”, stated **Mr. Georgios Chroussos, Chairman of the National Breast-feeding Board and Professor of the 1st Paediatrics Clinic of the University of Athens at "Agia Sophia" Children's Hospital.**

“In Greece, although 95% of mothers breast-feed their babies during their stay in the maternity hospital the first days after delivery, only 13-16% of them manage to exclusively breast-feed their babies for the first 6 months or more”. This was also remarked by Mrs Calliope Malpha-Nicholopoulou, Chairwoman of the Hellenic Midwives Association,

ΛΗΤΩ ΜΑΙΕΥΤΙΚΟ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΟΛΟΓΙΚΟ & ΧΕΙΡΟΥΡΓΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ Α.Ε.



ΟΜΙΛΟΣ ΥΓΕΙΑ



highlighting that “breast-feeding women have significantly lower risks of developing breast and ovarian cancer.”

Working together with WHO, UNICEF recommends exclusive breast-feeding for the first 6 months of the baby’s life. “In the light of available data, we can achieve up to 13% decrease in death rate of children below 5 years of age. Breast-feeding is the key to improve infantile survival”, stated Mr. Lambros Canelopoulos, Chairman of the Greek National Board of UNICEF.

“A considerably high percentage of mothers breast-feed exclusively their babies during their stay in LETO.” 34% of them continue exclusive breast-feeding for the next 3 months, 26% for a period of 6 months and 10% for more than 6 months. As Ms Eftychia Constandinidou, Directress-Midwife of the Maternity Hospital stated, this success is attributed to long-term efforts for promoting and supporting breast-feeding and to midwives’ certified specialization that enables them to apply a single policy working together with paediatricians. Puerperae learn advantages and benefits of breast-feeding and are trained on how to breast-feed. They also have access to a 24hour hot-line and home health care services after their discharge from the maternity hospital.”

During the ceremony, prizes were awarded to pupils and teachers of the 5th and 6th Grade of the 2nd Elementary School of Glyka Nera, Attica, which the Directress and midwives of LETO approached to make pupils aware asking them to draw "The 10 Steps of Breast-feeding". The poster created was hung in the puerperae' rooms as a written policy of breast-feeding.

Photographs on “Breast-feeding during the first hour of life” is also being exhibited in the maternity hospital lounge area throughout the Breast-feeding Week.