

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Juan F. Luis Hospital Unveils Lactation Room For Breastfeeding Employees

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ST. CROIX -- In honor of National Breastfeeding Awareness month, the Education Institute at the Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center (JFL), in collaboration with the V.I. Department of Health's Women Infant and Children's (WIC) program, hosted a breastfeeding symposium Monday to promote support and awareness on the importance of breastfeeding.

This year's theme is Breastfeeding: A Key to Sustainable Development, which puts the spotlight on a child's healthy development from the start, being the key to a good foundation for both that child, and ultimately the community.

The symposium took place in the Virgin Islands Cardiac Center from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., and presenters included WIC Health Educator and certified lactation specialist Donabel Pierre from the Department of Health, JFL Neonatal Intensive Care Unit nurse manager Faye John-Baptiste, and JFL Mother Baby Unit nurse manager Colleen Liburd Azubuike. The topics included Breastmilk: Nature's Superfood, and Supporting Breastfeeding Families in the Virgin Islands.

Following the symposium, participants and members of the media were invited to the unveiling and blessing of JFL's new corporate lactation room. Federal labor laws require employers to provide employees who are nursing, reasonable breaks throughout the workday to express milk, and it also requires that employers provide a private space other than a bathroom to express that milk.

JFL's corporate lactation room includes two recliners, a privacy curtain and access to hospital grade Medela breast pumps for the comfort of its employees. The new addition demonstrates JFL's commitment to providing a quality environment of care for its employees, as well as its patients.

Funding was provided through a \$50K donation from David A. Johnson of Cane Bay Partners VI, LLLP. It's the fifth room to be completed from Johnson's gift. Two patient rooms on the Mother/Baby unit as well as two rooms on the Labor and Delivery unit were renovated earlier this year with monies from Johnson's donation.

Feature Image: Erica Parsons, J.F.L.'s public information officer, sits on one of two recliner chairs located in the hospital's lactation room. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)