

PRESS RELEASE



Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road, Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950



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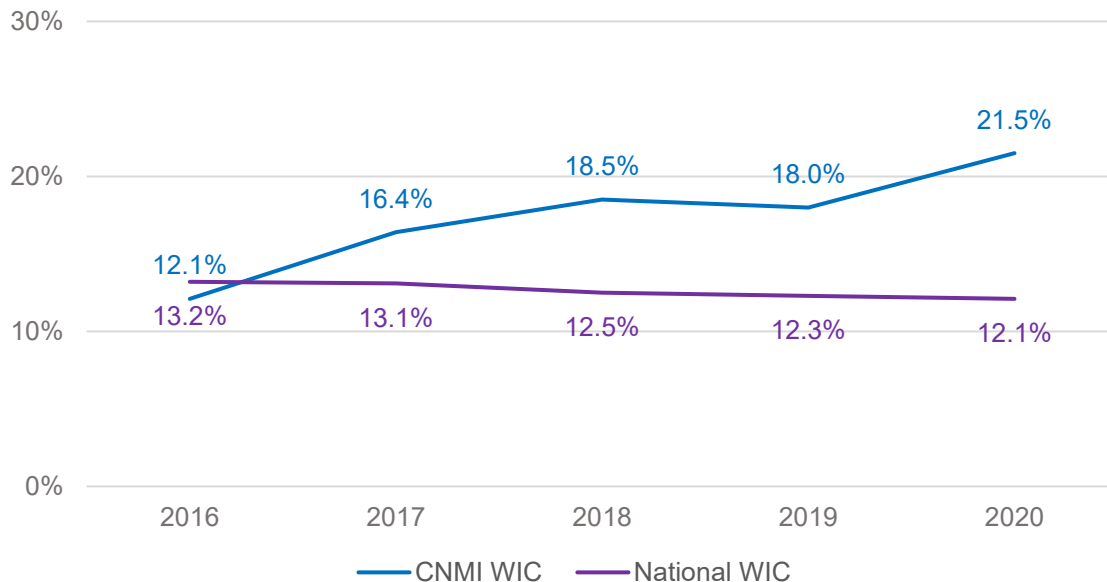
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CNMI WIC recognized by USDA for improving breastfeeding rate

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (CNMI WIC Program) was again named by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as one of its [2021 WIC Breastfeeding Performance Bonus Award winners](#) for its efforts in keeping the breastfeeding rates high in the CNMI.

Among CNMI WIC participants who fully breastfed—meaning infants of participating breastfeeding women who do not receive infant formula from the WIC program—the 2020 breastfeeding rate went up 3.5 percentage points to 21.5% when compared to 2019’s rate of 18%. The CNMI WIC Program will receive approximately \$2,000 for its accomplishments, and plans to use this funding to create a breastfeeding space at the CHCC, similar to the WIC clinic’s space.

WIC Fully Breastfed Rates



The [Surgeon General’s call to action in 2011](#) to support breastfeeding stated, “Only through the support of family members, communities, clinicians, health care systems, and employers will we be able to make breastfeeding become the easy choice, the default choice.” And WIC Program Administrator Erin Camacho echoes this sentiment, that “with proper support and guidance, we can meet mothers and babies where they are at with their breastfeeding journeys.”

During the pandemic, the CNMI WIC Program delivered breast pumps to mothers in the hospital which allowed for the continuation of its breastfeeding support. The program also implemented an internal referral system to strengthen its breastfeeding support during these changing times.

The program loans out hospital grade breast pumps to WIC mothers who may need a pump for various reasons, as well as breastfeeding aids, such as manual breast pumps, milk storage bags, nipple shields and shells, and nursing covers to assist mothers with their breastfeeding duration goals.

“This is not the first time that the CNMI WIC Program has received a breastfeeding award,” Camacho added. “But these awards remind us of the great work that we do, and the way in which we continue to realize our vision of healthy mothers, happy children, empowered families, and a resilient community.”

As part of the CHCC Maternal, Infant, Child, and Adolescent Health (MICAHA) programs, the CNMI WIC partners with MICAHA programs to implement cross-cutting evidence-based practices to meet its goal of longer breastfeeding duration at 6 months of age. Some activities from its strategic goals and objectives include establishing a warm hotline for breastfeeding support, and increasing breastfeeding support at the hospital and after discharge. Together with the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program, the CNMI WIC Program shares breastfeeding guidance and offers support where it is most crucial. With these strategies in place, coupled with other MICAHA interventions, increasing breastfeeding rates among all CNMI mothers remains one of the CNMI WIC Program’s highest priorities.

For more information about the CNMI WIC Program, visit www.chcc.gov.mp/cnmiwic.php.

For more information about other CHCC MICAHA programs, visit <https://chcc.gov.mp/maternalchildhealth.php>.

For more information about CHCC programs, follow @cnmichcc on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; visit www.chcc.gov.mp; or call (670) 234-8950.

This press release may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html>.