



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pediatric Associates of Lewiston announces grand opening of the state's first outpatient donor milk dispensary

Pediatric Associates of Lewiston announces the grand opening of Maine's first outpatient donor milk dispensary, in partnership with Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast. The grand opening will take place on Thursday, July 18, 2019 at 11:00 am at Pediatric Associates of Lewiston, 33 Mollison Way, Lewiston, ME. Families, healthcare providers, and community members are welcome to attend the family-friendly celebration, which will include a ribbon-cutting, refreshments, and information on receiving and donating milk.

A donor milk dispensary is a community location where a family whose baby has a prescription for donor milk can fill the prescription and take home the milk. Currently, babies at certain Maine hospitals can receive donor milk while hospitalized. However, once a baby leaves the hospital, if the baby still needs milk, the family must order the milk to be shipped overnight from Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast in Newton, MA.

The milk bank collects milk from mothers who have more milk than their babies need; screens, pasteurizes, and tests the milk; then dispenses it to babies whose mothers do not have enough milk for them.

Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast has six milk depots (drop-off sites) in Maine, but this is the organization's first milk dispensary in the state. "A donor milk dispensary is a forward-thinking and innovative way to foster health and ensure that as many babies as possible have access to human milk," commented Ann Marie Lindquist, Director of Community Relations for Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast. "We are thrilled to partner with Pediatric Associates of Lewiston on this unique community resource."

Minot mother, Allison Bruno, a dietician at Central Maine Medical Center, is one of over 6,000 women who have been screened as milk donors by Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast. "Being a registered dietitian and working in a hospital I see the effects good nutrition can have on patients' health," commented Allison. "As I was pumping extra milk I would always try and think of the babies in need of this wonderful gift. In our specific area we see a lot of sick babies that could use a little extra love and nutrition from breast milk and it always helped me to think of those in need and the gift I could provide."

Milk donor screening, modeled after blood donor screening, includes health history, physician approval, and a blood test. These are some of the many measures taken to ensure the safety of milk for the newborn babies served by Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast. Milk from mothers who pass the screening is also pasteurized and tested by an independent lab to ensure safety before being dispensed to hospitals or families.

Human milk can be lifesaving for preterm infants. It is especially protective against a life-threatening condition called necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), which affects one in ten of the smallest preterm infants. Human breastmilk is estimated to lower the risk of this condition by 79%. It also lowers hospital costs by reducing costs for care and shortening hospital stays. Donor milk is rapidly becoming the standard supplement to mothers' milk for preterm infants in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs). In addition, an increasing number of community hospitals with regular and special care nurseries use donor milk when babies need a supplement to their mothers' own milk.

By opening a donor milk dispensary, Pediatric Associates of Lewiston is on the leading edge of organizations providing access to donor milk in the community outside of the hospital setting. The only other outpatient dispensary in the Northeast is located in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire.

The importance of breastfeeding for the health of mother and baby is well-established, with all major medical and public health organizations endorsing breastfeeding. Use of donor milk supports breastfeeding in the long run. When a baby requires supplementation in the early days after birth, research shows that mothers tend to view donor milk as a temporary bridge and formula as a long-term solution. Thus having donor milk available at community locations like this dispensary can be an essential component in preserving and protecting breastfeeding for mothers and babies.

Dr. Linda Glass, Supervising Physician and Pediatrician at Pediatric Associates of Lewiston, notes: "All of us at Pediatric Associates are excited for the opportunity to implement the first outpatient breastmilk dispensary in our state. Our goal is to provide access to breastmilk for babies and their Mom's which will facilitate successful and long-term breastfeeding and its' benefits."

Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast is a nonprofit community milk bank accredited by the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA). The milk bank has been screening donors, pasteurizing milk, and dispensing to over 90 hospitals and to families throughout the Northeastern United States since 2011.

Families and healthcare providers seeking more information on receiving or donating milk can check the milk bank's website at <https://milkbankne.org/>. Dispensary is available to public by appointment only. Dispensary Operation Hours are Monday - Friday from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Please contact Jenny Desmarais, Lactation Counselor at (207) 784-5782 for more information.