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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **WIC Celebrates 40 Years of Service to Those in Need**

### ***Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Helps Celebrate 40 Years of WIC and 10 Years of Peer Counseling - Receiving Rising Star Ruby Award***

Champaign, IL – In 2013, the Illinois WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program served over 280,000 low-income, pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children. Governor, Pat Quinn, recently issued a Proclamation announcing April 2014 as WIC Month in Illinois, encouraging all citizens to support and promote the WIC program.

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) offers the WIC program to clients assisting over 4,000 families each year offering knowledge and skills to help them make healthy choices for their families. WIC is a Special Supplemental Nutrition Program that provides healthy food vouchers and is aimed to improve the health and wellbeing of pregnant women, moms and infants up to age 5. According to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), “Nearly 40 percent of all babies born in Illinois are WIC participants and research shows that WIC has been successful in the reduction of fetal deaths, infant mortality, low birth weight rates, iron deficiency anemia in children and increased immunization rates.”

Illinois also participates in the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling program, offered through the WIC program. CUPHD was recently awarded the Rising Star Ruby Award for their efforts in assisting local hospitals with the Baby-Friendly Designation process. With the partnership of health departments and hospitals, cohesive supports systems can develop to benefit breastfeeding moms making way for breastfeeding friendly communities. This is a four-phase process that generally takes several years to complete. According to IDHS, “Illinois has increased the number of hospitals in the Baby-Friendly pathway from 10 in late 2011 to 56 at the end of 2013.”

For more information, visit [www.c-uphd.org](http://www.c-uphd.org) or [www.babyfriendlyusa.org](http://www.babyfriendlyusa.org).

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