FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Birth Center at North Valley Hospital Receives Baby Friendly Designation

WHITEFISH, MT – July 2, 2018: The Birth Center at North Valley Hospital recently received designation as a Baby Friendly Facility, from Baby Friendly USA, the accrediting body and national authority for the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in the United States.

Baby Friendly began in 1991 when the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) launched the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, a global program to encourage the broad-scale implementation of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

“Our nurses, providers, staff, and employees in all departments of the hospital have worked toward this designation for five years,” explains Birth Center Director Cindy Walp. “This is a major achievement for not only our hospital, but for our patients who appreciate the comfortable, family-focused atmosphere that The Birth Center at North Valley Hospital is known for.”

Baby Friendly designation involves hospital-wide focus on keeping babies and families together and reducing stress during the birth experience. North Valley Hospital has always supported programs such as rooming in, when newborns stay in-room with their parents; breastfeeding first, to encourage all women who are able to breastfeed if possible; and skin-to-skin contact, allowing mothers to hold their newborn babies immediately after birth.

In addition, The Birth Center educates patients about the benefits of breastfeeding, skin to skin contact, and family togetherness during the prenatal and postnatal periods. “With this education, parents are free to make informed choices about their feeding choice and hospital stay,” says Walp.

In 2015, The Birth Center completed an expansion to provide more beds and spacious rooms for patients. “This was part of our baby friendly journey, as keeping families together is proven to be a critical aspect of having happy, healthy babies, and we always encourage what is best for baby, mother, and family,” says Walp.

“We had strong support from hospital leadership, physicians, and the medical committee that oversees obstetrics and pediatrics at North Valley Hospital,” says Walp. “There was 100% buy in from our hospital community, recognizing the enormous benefit that a baby friendly facility can have on our greater service area and our patients.”

The designation establishes The Birth Center as one of 11 Baby Friendly Hospitals in Montana, and North Valley Hospital joins 528 designated hospitals nationwide. The Birth Center at North Valley Hospital is the only Baby Friendly facility in the Kalispell Regional Healthcare system.

About North Valley Hospital:

North Valley Hospital is a 501©(3), non-profit community Critical Access hospital and affiliate of Kalispell Regional Healthcare. North Valley Hospital is the first hospital in Montana to be affiliated with Planetree. Planetree is a non-profit organization that provides education and information in a collaborative community of healthcare organizations, facilitating efforts to create patient centered care.
in healing environments. North Valley Hospital receives no tax support for its services. The hospital and its outreach clinics serve Flathead and Lincoln counties.