How the Affordable Care Act is Helping Breastfeeding Moms

The Affordable Care Act has provided positive changes for breastfeeding. Under the prevention portion, health insurance plans must provide breastfeeding support, counseling, and equipment for the duration of breastfeeding. These services may be provided before and after baby’s birth. Breastfeeding support is very important for nursing mothers and some breastfeeding supplies, such as breast pumps can be very costly. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, obtaining these items is now easier for most mothers.

In Wood County, many insurance companies provide a double electric breast pump to moms who are returning to work or school. Most commonly, this pump is obtained through a medical equipment provider following the baby’s birth. The mother simply needs a prescription from her physician to obtain one.

Marshfield resident and new mother, Abigail Swoboda obtained a double electric breast pump through her insurance company. She shared, “The breast pump that I received through my insurance helped me achieve my goal of giving my baby girl what is best for her, breastmilk.”

Kristen Niehaus of Marshfield also benefited through receiving a pump, she states, “Through my insurance company, I was able to afford a great breast pump which will provide my son with an unlimited amount of the best nutrition a mother can provide.”

The degree of coverage and the supplies covered varies among insurance providers. Some companies have been “grandfathered” and therefore do not need to cover these services and supplies. The Wood County Breastfeeding Coalition recommends mother’s contact their insurance companies during pregnancy to find out what their plan covers. They should contact the insurance company by calling the customer service number on the back of their insurance card. The following are recommended questions to ask:

1. Will I be able to get a pump from you?

2. What kind of pump will I receive and from what manufacturer?

3. What type of pump will I receive?

 -Manual pump

 -Double electric personal pump

 -Hospital-grade rental pump

4. What documentation is required (i.e., do I need a doctor’s order)?

5. Any other information about the process that I should know before delivery?

Contacting their insurance company will help moms be prepared for their breastfeeding journey. The more calls the insurance companies receive, the more they will understand the importance of covering breastfeeding services and supplies.

After delivery, Wood County has a number of lactation professionals to serve nursing mothers and families. There are lactation specialists at Riverview Hospital, Ministry Saint Joseph’s Hospital, Aspirus Doctor’s Clinic, and the Wood County Health Department. For a list of breastfeeding resources, or for any questions about the Affordable Care Act, contact Leah or Amber at (715) 421-8911 or e-mail wcbc@outlook.com

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