

OhioHealth Mothers' Milk Bank to Open Milk Drop Site at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health

Grand opening is Monday, May 15

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The OhioHealth Mothers' Milk Bank will celebrate the grand opening of a new milk drop location at Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) on Monday, May 15, 2023 at 11 a.m. The new milk drop site, located at 5550 Venture Drive in Parma, will house a freezer to store donated human milk from approved donors, which will then be transferred to the milk bank in Columbus at no cost to the donor.

The OhioHealth Mothers' Milk Bank, under the guidelines of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA), provides pasteurized human milk to those infants whose parents are unable to provide milk to nourish their babies. It is one of just 30 milk banks in North America – 27 in the United States and three in Canada. The new site at CCBH marks the 22nd OhioHealth milk drop location in Ohio. The donated milk is distributed throughout North America to babies in need.

"We are thrilled to be opening this new milk drop to make donating even easier," said Chris Smith, RN, IBCLC, outreach coordinator and lactation consultant at the milk bank. "With this new milk drop, approved donors in and around Cleveland can conveniently donate their milk. Pasteurized donor milk is liquid gold for babies who need it. In 2022 alone we distributed nearly 450,000 ounces of milk to hospitals in 11 states – that's 3,515 gallons! Just one ounce can feed a premature infant for three days, so every little bit helps."

"We are proud to open a milk drop site at our agency," said Dr. Rod Harris, CCBH Health Commissioner. "Nursing parents will now have a convenient place to drop off their vital gift of donated breastmilk to share with infants and children who are the most in need. Across the nation as well as here in Cuyahoga County, babies of color are disproportionately affected by preterm births and infant mortality. The essential nutrition provided by breastmilk can support these infants and help them thrive. By becoming a milk drop site, we are able to provide support for families at a critical time. This is an important step in achieving equitable outcomes for all children across our county."

The milk bank, which is located in the OhioHealth Eastside Health Center in Columbus, relies on donations from healthy, lactating people who generously provide milk to help other babies. Interested donors are encouraged to email milkbank@ohiohealth.com or call 614.566.0630 to arrange a screening phone interview.

To become a human milk donor, parents must take part in a screening process to ensure the quality and safety of the milk. This process includes a phone screening to verify eligibility, completion of a medical and lifestyle history review, a signed medical release from the donor and physician, and consent to receive a blood test to screen for HIV, HTLV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and syphilis. The donated milk is pasteurized, frozen and distributed by physician prescription.