
CRMC Maternity Awarded Certificate of Excellence

The New York State Department of Health recently recognized the Cortland Regional Medical Center Maternity Department staff for 100% compliance with a state mandate aimed at protecting newborns against the hepatitis B virus (HBV). A Certificate of Excellence, presented to Maternity Nurse Manager Tammy Finn, R.N., and the maternity staff “recognizes the efforts to prevent perinatal transmission of hepatitis B virus by being 100% compliant with requirements that mandate testing, reporting and recording hepatitis B status for all pregnant women, and that a minimum 90% birth dose rate of HBV vaccine was given to all newborns.”

Hepatitis B is a serious public health problem that affects people of all ages. It is caused by a highly infectious virus that attacks the liver and can lead to severe illness, liver damage, and in some cases, death. Each year approximately 19,000 women with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infections give birth in the United States. Pregnant women infected with HBV can transmit the infection to their babies. Many of these babies develop lifelong HBV infections, and up to 25% will develop liver failure or liver cancer later in life. Both the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend a birth dose of HBV vaccine for all newborns. It is estimated that 90% of perinatal HBV infections can be prevented if vaccination is given within 12 hours of birth.

The Department of Health is responsible for measuring compliance in delivery hospitals across the state by performing record reviews. Staff from the Cortland County Health Department conducted its review of maternal and newborn records at CRMC in April of this year. Among the findings, 91% of infants born at CRMC received their birth dose of HBV. It should be noted that, while the vaccine is strongly supported by the DOH and AAP, it is still a voluntary program and parents can opt to refuse to have their baby vaccinated. All expectant mothers are encouraged to seek the advice of their own physicians as to whether to have their newborn vaccinated for HBV.

“The Cortland County Health Department and CRMC have had a good collaborative relationship over the years,” said Mary Ann Haley, Deputy Public Health Director. “This relationship allows us to work together towards the goal of a healthier community. I’d like to recognize the CRMC maternity providers and staff for the essential role they play in this partnership. Congratulations to the Maternity Unit staff for reaching 100% compliance in the 2010 Perinatal HepB record review, and for a job well done.”