

# *Cuba Consolidates Its Mother-Child Healthcare Program*

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Havana, August 4 (RHC)-- Dr. Roberto Álvarez Fumero, Head of the National Mother-Child Healthcare Program at the Cuban Public Health Ministry said the sector's indicators in the first half of 2017 are a clear indication that the program has further consolidated nationwide.

The health official referred to the country registering an infant mortality rate of 4.1 for every 1,000 live births during the first six months of 2017 - the result of the hard work and dedication of the sector professionals and an indication of the high levels of comprehensive social development achieved in the country.

Dr. Álvarez Fumero stated that these results have been significantly impacted by efforts to promote breastfeeding and pointed to the opening of the country's tenth Human Milk Bank at the Gustavo Aldereguía Hospital in the province of Cienfuegos.

He said the new specialized center will contribute to further strengthening the network of this type of institutions, while also placing Cuba third among Latin American nations with the highest rate of breast milk banks per capita, surpassed only by Brazil and Uruguay.

Human Milk Banks help guarantee this vital substance for those infants who are seriously ill or require surgery within the first days of life, and whose mothers are unable to breastfeed them.

Dr. Álvarez Fumero also noted that over the past 12 months, the country's network of human milk banks – which covers 60% of the island's provinces – has offered some 10,988 women assistance and guidance on correct breastfeeding techniques and how to donate milk.

The health official thanked the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, for its continued support and contribution to this and other social programs in Cuba.

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