

# *Cuba continues to support other health programs*



**Cuba continues with other health programs despite U.S. blockade?**

by María Josefina Arce

The confrontation with COVID 19 has required the expenditure of considerable resources, however, Cuba has not neglected other branches of health, despite the economic limitations imposed by the U.S. blockade.

Vital programs have not been stopped, such as maternal and child health, which is supported by breastfeeding, given the importance of this activity for the proper development of infants.

It has been scientifically demonstrated that breast milk contains more than 300 nutrients and specific amounts of fats, sugars, proteins, water and vitamins. It reduces the risk of malnutrition and protects against frequent childhood illnesses such as diarrhea, allergies, asthma and respiratory conditions.

In this regard, a human milk bank was recently inaugurated at the William Soler Pediatric Hospital in Havana, which will allow this center to have the precious food available for babies weighing less than 1,500 grams or for those who require intestinal surgery.

This effort by Cuba has been accompanied by UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, which recognizes the country's political will to take care of its children and guarantee their adequate development from birth.

Thanks to this cooperation, in the last 15 years the national network of banks has been strengthened, which today has 14 centers of this type distributed in 13 provinces of the Cuban territory.

According to the Cubadebate digital site, last year, even in the midst of the pandemic, the human milk bank system benefited 4,476 children in intensive and pediatric therapies.

These children are nourished with the breast milk donated by other mothers, after undergoing a pasteurization process that ensures compliance with health standards and its conservation for nine months to a year.

Hence the importance of promoting this kind of donation, which is a true act of love and altruism that brings multiple benefits to the little ones.

These donor mothers are united not only by a feeling of solidarity, but also of gratitude, since in many cases their children have benefited from the donation of other mothers and have seen how their babies have evolved favorably.

Cuba's efforts, supported by UNICEF, has had a great impact on the reduction of infant mortality, an aspect in which the island's indicators are comparable to those of developed nations.

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