

10 Steps to Empower Mothers & Nurture Babies

Vermont Statewide Breastfeeding Initiative

Preventing childhood obesity and promoting lifelong health begins with breastfeeding. Breastfeeding for at least nine months decreases a baby's odds of becoming overweight by more than 30 percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. Hospital policies, procedures and staff can have a great influence on mothers and babies as they begin to breastfeed, either helping or hindering their success. Even mothers who want to breastfeed have a hard time continuing without hospital support.

In Vermont, more than 88 percent of mothers breastfeed in the hospital. The hospital stay is a critical period for mothers and infants to establish a positive start to breastfeeding from both a physiological and maternal confidence perspective. By six months, only one in four mothers are still exclusively breastfeeding their babies, and the reasons many mothers give for stopping breastfeeding before they planned or wanted to are related to their experiences in the hospital.

To improve the rate of exclusive breastfeeding through the baby's first year, the Vermont Department of Health's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) partnered with the Vermont Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Vermont Academy of Family Physicians, and the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP) to facilitate a statewide quality improvement initiative to increase evidence based maternity care practices, in alignment with the WHO's "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding". The goal of this initiative is to elevate standards of care that will increase exclusive breastfeeding rates in Vermont, helping to prevent obesity and improve health outcomes by assisting hospitals to adopt the American Academy of Pediatrics-endorsed "10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding". Ten of Vermont's 12 birthing hospitals chose to participate in the project.

Project Goals

All participating hospital embraced the four collaborative goals.

1. 100% of participating hospital will have administrative support for participation
2. 90% of RN staff from participating hospitals will complete a 16 hour breastfeeding training
3. 100% of participating hospitals will have an updated or draft breastfeeding policy for all mother/baby units
4. 100% of participating hospitals will demonstrate appropriate use of infant feeding supplementation

Perinatal QI teams, with support from project faculty, set goals based on current practice and identified gaps in care in their individual hospitals. Goals focus on "high impact" areas which will improve rates of exclusive breastfeeding and provide a foundation for sustained breastfeeding, once the mother and her newborn are discharged.

Implementing hospital practices proven to better support mothers and babies can improve breastfeeding rates.

The '**10 Steps for Successful Breastfeeding**', the core of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. These action steps for hospitals include:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Assist with initiation of skin-to-skin and breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation, even if they are separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice "rooming in"— allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

Self-Assessment/Site Visits

Project staff met with QI teams from each hospital to review a “10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding” checklist. Teams were encouraged to develop individual QI goals to add or strengthen any steps not in place. The majority of hospitals have steps 5, 7 and 8 well established on their mother/baby units. Gaps in practice exist around steps 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10. And, while most hospitals have a written policy, it is not routinely communicated to staff. Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital is renewing their Baby-Friendly Hospital designation and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, Springfield Hospital, Rutland Regional Medical Center and Northwestern Medical Center will be working toward Baby-Friendly Hospital designation. (Baby-Friendly designation verifies that a hospital has comprehensively implemented the American Academy of Pediatrics-endorsed *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*, as established in the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.)

Training

Birth and Beyond Breastfeeding Training

The 16 hour training was adapted from the California Perinatal Services Network, Birth and Beyond curriculum which was developed in collaboration with The Regional Perinatal Programs of California and Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles. Early emphasis on skin-to-skin practices in the first hours after birth for all mothers and babies, not just breastfeeding couplets, is an important part of the training. Nurses intuitively recognize the first hours after birth as an important bonding time. The training provided an opportunity for learning best practices for supporting early maternal-infant bonding through skin-to-skin contact, and delivered new knowledge and skills to promote, protect and support a mother’s decision to breastfeed. In addition, a *Train-the-Trainer* workshop for select staff was provided to help sustain the ongoing training needs of each facility.

Key Project Faculty and Workshop Training Team

Audrey Naylor, MD, DrPH, FAAP, FABM, Laura Murphy, MD, Anya Koutras, MD, IBCLC, Rebecca Goodman, MD, IBCLC, Dawn Kersula, MA, RN, IBCLC, FACCE, Tricia Cassi, BSS, IBCLC, Molly Rideout, MD, Jennifer Ustianov, BSN, RN, Kirsten Berggren, PhD, FNP, IBCLC, Patricia Berry MPH, Karen Flynn and Elizabeth Hunt, MD, IBCLC.

Support from community providers is needed...

Promote the 10 Steps for Successful Breastfeeding and other policies and procedures that support and facilitate the breastfeeding goals of patients in your community. You can,

- Provide prenatal breastfeeding education
- Provide postpartum breastfeeding support and referral
- Train yourself and your staff in the current evidence base breastfeeding practices, offer anticipatory guidance and support and refer patients to an IBCLC and/or a WIC Peer Counselor to help your patients meet their exclusive breastfeeding goals.

To learn more:

[Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Statement on Educational Objectives and Skill for the Physician with Respect to Breastfeeding](#)

[Doctors in Action: A Call to Action from the Surgeon General to Support Breastfeeding](#)

2010 PRAMS Breastfeeding Highlights

- 88% of mothers initiated breastfeeding.
 - 79% breastfed at least 4 weeks.
 - 71% breastfed at least 8 weeks.
- Of mothers who did not breastfeed – the most common reasons given for not breastfeeding were not wanting to breastfeed (55%) or caring for other children (32%).
- Of mothers who had stopped breastfeeding at the time of the survey, the most common reasons given for stopping were that breast milk alone did not satisfy the baby (38%) and not producing enough milk (37%).
- Since their new baby was born, 89% of mothers reported getting help with or information on breastfeeding from a healthcare provider.

Background:

In 2009, ten out of twelve eligible Vermont hospitals responded the CDC's Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Each reporting hospital received its facility specific mPINC benchmarking report in March 2011. Vermont composite quality practice score was 76 out of 100 and ranked 6th out of 52 states. Vermont's strengths were the provision of breastfeeding advice and counseling and the documentation of mother's infant feeding decisions. Priorities areas for changes to improve maternity care practices were cited in the aggregate Vermont report. In order for hospitals and birthing centers in Vermont to more successfully meet national quality of care standards for perinatal care, the report recommended focusing on improvement in the following areas:

- use of combined mother/baby postpartum care
- adequate assessment of staff competency
- inclusion of model breastfeeding policy elements, and,
- appropriate use of breastfeeding supplements,

Protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding are critical public health needs. Healthy People 2020 has set goals for increasing breastfeeding initiation, exclusivity and duration and decreasing disparities in these rates across all populations in the United States. Increasing breastfeeding and reducing disparities is also a major focus of the US Department of Health and Human Services, highlighted in the 2011 Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding; the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity; the Institute of Medicine's - Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Policies; and, USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.

The Vermont Department of Health's Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program has partnered with VTAAP and the VCHIP to facilitate a statewide quality improvement initiative focused on increasing evidence based maternity care practices as standards of care in Vermont hospitals. This work is based on a similar project conducted in California that worked with hospitals to implement evidence based policies, and mirrors work being conducted at the national level by the CDC and the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality.

Changing hospital practices to better support mothers and babies can improve breastfeeding rates. The Ten Steps for Successful Breastfeeding are evidence-based policies and practices that increase breastfeeding. Implementing proven hospital practices, such as the '10 Steps for Successful Breastfeeding' is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Goals

There are four collaborative goals set for all participating hospitals.

1. 100% of participating hospital will have administrative support for participation
2. 90% of RN staff from participating hospitals will complete a 16 hour breastfeeding training
3. 100% of participating hospitals will have a updated or draft breastfeeding policy for all mother/baby units
4. 100% of participating hospitals will demonstrate appropriate use of infant feeding supplementation

Individual hospital goals, based on current practice and identified gaps in care, will be set by the perinatal QI team with support from project faculty. Individual goals will focus on "high impact" areas which will improve rates of exclusive breastfeeding and provide a foundation for sustained breastfeeding, once the mother and her newborn are discharged.

Participating hospitals were asked to:

1. Complete an pre-project assessment survey to set goals for improving maternity care practices for all mother baby pairs, with a focus on exclusive breastfeeding
2. Provide the resources necessary to complete this quality improvement project
3. Support the perinatal quality improvement team as they work to accomplish set goals and collaborate with other hospital and community members in this statewide effort
4. Engage administrative support through a signed letter
5. Support staff members who provide maternity care services to participate in the 16 hour training component.

Breastfeeding Training Workshops

Birth and Beyond Breastfeeding Training

The 16 hour learner workshop curriculum was adapted from the California Perinatal Services Network, Birth and Beyond curriculum which was developed in collaboration with The Regional Perinatal Programs of California and Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles. Early emphasis on skin-to-skin practices in the first hours after birth for all mothers and babies, not just breastfeeding couplets, is an important part of the initial BBC training. Nurses intuitively recognized the first hours after birth as an important bonding time. The Learner Workshop provides an opportunity for learning best practices for supporting early maternal-infant bonding through skin-to-skin contact. The training provided maternity care staff with the new knowledge and skills to promote, protect and support a mother's decision to breastfeed. In addition to the *Learner Workshop*, a *Train-the-Trainer* workshop for select staff was provided to help support the ongoing training needs of each facility.

Sustainability to meet ongoing training needs is accomplished through the Train-the-Trainer workshops to develop a training team for each hospital. Hospital administrators select staff from those who attended the Learner Workshop to receive an additional 8 hour training to gain experience in teaching the curricula by attending a Train-the-Trainer Workshop.

Training Summary

Learner Workshop

The 16-hour Learner Workshop evolved from the California's Perinatal Services Network's *Birth and Beyond California (BBC)*, the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles' *Gentle Transitions* and the *Baby-Friendly USA Ten Steps Curriculum*. The course is divided into two eight-hour days, separated by a two week interval.

. The two-week hiatus between the two Learner Workshops allow staff to explore and observe skin-to-skin interaction between the newborn and his or her parents at their own facility.

Train-the-Trainer Workshops

Sustainability to meet ongoing training needs is accomplished through the Train-the-Trainer workshops to develop a training team for each hospital. Hospital administrators select staff from those who attended the Learner Workshop to receive an additional 8 hour training to gain experience in teaching the curricula by attending a Train-the-Trainer Workshop. The training emphasizes adult learning theory and the rationale for utilizing different modalities when providing adult staff education. Each hospital team will have the opportunity to teach a section of the Learner Workshop and receive feedback on their presentation.

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