

Report to/Rapport au :

**Ottawa Board of Health
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa**

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CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE

Ref N°: ASC2012-OPH-HPDP-0007

**SUBJECT: BABY-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE: PROTECTING, PROMOTING AND
SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING**

**OBJET : L'INITIATIVE AMIS DES BÉBÉS : PROTÉGER, PROMOUVOIR ET
SOUTENIR L'ALLAITEMENT**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit approve the process to achieve Baby-Friendly Initiative designation by December 2012, as outlined in this report.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la Ville d'Ottawa approuve le processus pour obtenir la désignation « ami des bébés » d'ici décembre 2012 tel qu'il est décrit dans le présent rapport.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Baby Friendly Initiative is an international program established by the World Health Organization (WHO) to help families make informed decisions about infant feeding and breaks down barriers to breastfeeding. It also involves creating supportive environments and front-line services in the workplace and in the community to increase awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding and encourage the provision of breast milk.

As part of the Public Health Accountability Agreements with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, all Ontario public health units are expected to work towards achieving Baby-Friendly designation. This designation also aligns with the Ontario Public Health Standards to achieve several outcomes related to breastfeeding.

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) has a long history of actively protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding: providing prenatal education, tele-nursing services and Well Baby Drop-Ins. OPH recognizes that not everyone can breastfeed and is committed to supporting all families, regardless of feeding choice, to ensure the best start in life for infants. Clients will always be provided with evidence-based information and will receive efficient and effective service.

By strengthening our organizational capacity, working collaboratively with community partners and ensuring accessibility of evidence-based information on infant feeding practices, OPH is working to join a growing number of local health agencies – the Somerset-West and Centretown Community Health Centres – in achieving Baby-Friendly designation by December 2012.

RÉSUMÉ

L'Initiative des amis des bébés est un programme international de l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé (OMS) qui aide les familles à prendre des décisions éclairées relativement à l'alimentation de leur bébé et lutte contre les entraves à l'allaitement. Elle cherche aussi à créer des environnements favorables et des services de première ligne dans les lieux de travail et la communauté pour promouvoir les avantages de l'allaitement et encourager les dons de lait maternel.

Dans le cadre de l'entente de responsabilité sur la santé publique avec le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée, tous les bureaux de santé de l'Ontario doivent tenter d'obtenir la certification « Amis des bébés », laquelle concorde également avec les Normes de santé publique de l'Ontario en faveur de l'atteinte d'objectifs relatifs à l'allaitement.

Il y a longtemps que Santé publique Ottawa (SPO) protège, promeut et soutient l'allaitement en offrant de l'éducation prénatale, des services infirmiers téléphoniques et des haltes-accueils « parents-bébés ». SPO reconnaît que ce ne sont pas toutes les mères qui peuvent allaiter, et s'engage à soutenir toutes les familles, quelle que soit leur façon de nourrir leur bébé, pour donner aux enfants le meilleur départ possible. Les clients recevront toujours des renseignements fondés sur des données probantes et auront accès à un service efficace et efficient.

En renforçant sa capacité organisationnelle, en collaborant avec des partenaires de la communauté et en veillant à l'accessibilité de renseignements fiables sur les pratiques d'allaitement, SPO cherche à se joindre d'ici décembre 2012 au nombre croissant d'agences de santé locales – dont les Centres de santé communautaires de Somerset Ouest et du Centre-ville – désignées « Amis des bébés ».

BACKGROUND

OPH has a long history of actively protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding, which includes:

- Prenatal education
- Home visits to families with children up to the age of six years
- Advising mothers through the Ottawa Public Health Information Line (OPHIL) tele-nursing service regarding access to immediate support services, community resources, providing information and counselling to mothers who are struggling with breastfeeding during the initiation stage and beyond. OPHIL handles more than 1,500 calls regarding breastfeeding per year.
- Well-Baby Drop-Ins, which provide assessment, support, referral and information for new parents on the feeding and care for their children
- Ottawa Breastfeeding Buddies peer support program, which pairs expecting and new moms, with experienced moms, who offer support and guidance
- Provision of support to community partners that provide breastfeeding drop-ins
- Partnership with Mothercraft to ensure weekend breastfeeding support
- Community-wide promotion events, such as the Annual Breastfeeding Challenge

The Baby-Friendly Initiative is an international program established by the WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund to protect, promote and support the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding. Since 1991, it has encouraged and recognized health services that offer an optimal level of care for mothers and infants through its designation process. The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada is the National Authority for the Baby-Friendly Initiative and is working to implement this through provincial and territorial action. Baby-Friendly Initiative designation involves the successful completion of a 10 step process, which includes staff training, the provision of evidence-based information, the creation of supportive environments, the promotion of important infant care practices and linkages to community supports (Document 1). OPH is working to achieve Baby-Friendly designation by December 2012.

As part of the new Public Health Accountability Agreements with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, all Ontario public health units are expected to work towards achieving Baby-Friendly designation. This designation also aligns with the Ontario Public Health Standards to achieve several outcomes related to breastfeeding. To date, seven Ontario public health units have received Baby-Friendly designation.

Breastfeeding in Ottawa

The WHO, the Canadian Paediatric Society and Health Canada recommend exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age, with continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond. OPH supports these health-based recommendations and is working towards increasing the percentage of infants who are exclusively provided breastmilk up to six months and beyond. The Baby-Friendly Initiative will help OPH achieve this goal.

From 2009 to 2010, 93.8 per cent of mothers in Ottawa initiated breastfeeding and 71 per cent of mothers were breastfeeding at 6 months (Table 1). Forty-one per cent of all mothers were exclusively breastfeeding when their baby was 6 months old.

Table 1 – Proportion of women who intended to breastfeed, proportion who initiated breastfeeding and duration of breastfeeding in Ottawa, Ontario and Canada

Location	Intention (%)	Initiation (%) ⁽³⁾	3 months – any breast milk (%) ⁽³⁾	3 months – exclusive breast milk (%) ⁽³⁾	4 months – any breast milk (%) ⁽³⁾	4 months – exclusive breast milk (%) ⁽³⁾	6 months – any breast milk (%) ⁽³⁾	6 months – exclusive breast milk (%) ⁽³⁾
Ottawa	92.0 ⁽¹⁾	93.8	79.9	68.1	73.1	60.0	71.3	41.0
Ontario	89.6 ⁽¹⁾	88.5	53.2	52.6	57.7	42.4	47.3	25.3
Canada	90.0 ⁽²⁾	87.4 ⁽⁴⁾	---	---	---	---	---	26.2 ⁽⁴⁾

(1) BORN Ontario Perinatal Health Report 2008. Eastern Ontario Public Health Region. Note: missing data is excluded from the denominator which may result in an inflated proportion.

(2) What Mothers Say: The Canadian Maternity Experiences Survey 2006-2007

(3) Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2009/2010. Ontario Share File. Statistics Canada

(4) Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2009/2010. CANSIM 105-0502. Statistics Canada

Barriers to providing breast milk exclusively and how Baby-Friendly designation helps to overcome these barriers

Many mothers intend to breastfeed, however, the number of mothers who are exclusively breastfeeding decline as time progresses. The first six weeks after birth are crucial to establishing successful breastfeeding and evidence indicates that mothers who do not get support from family, friends or workplaces are more likely to cease breastfeeding. This is a window of opportunity when consistent support and messaging by health care services and OPH are essential.

The practices and principles of the Baby-Friendly Initiative help to mitigate these barriers by:

- Providing evidence-based information prenatally before mothers make feeding decisions
- Addressing marketing of breastmilk substitutes, which can influence feeding decisions
- Creating environments that support breastfeeding
- Facilitating seamless continuity of care between hospital and home
- Increasing consistency and reliability of messaging by health professionals on infant care practices that support breastfeeding, such as rooming-in during postpartum hospital stays so mother can respond quickly to baby's feeding cues, and teaching mothers how to recognize these feeding cues
- Recognizing the importance of promoting the availability and access to community resources and services
- Collecting data on an on-going basis to monitor the barriers affecting the provision of breastmilk as well as experiences and types of support that families found useful in enhancing their breastfeeding experience

DISCUSSION

Protecting, promoting and supporting the provision of breastmilk involves making evidence-based information available to women of child-bearing age, their partners and their families, so that informed decisions about infant feeding can be made. It also involves creating supportive environments and providing front-line services in the workplace and in the community that encourage the provision of breastmilk and increases public awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding.

OPH also recognizes the role of fathers in infant care and feeding. Materials are available outlining the supportive role that fathers and partners can play to support mothers in providing breastmilk.

Achieving Baby-Friendly designation

OPH recognizes that not everyone can breastfeed and is committed to supporting all families, regardless of feeding choice, to ensure the best start in life for infants. Clients will always be provided with evidence-based information and will receive efficient and effective service. However, through training, staff members, students, managers, volunteers and Board members are being reminded of the benefits and importance of breastfeeding, made aware of appropriate messaging for women of child-bearing age and provided with evidence-based information. As part of achieving Baby-Friendly designation, Breastfeeding Committee for Canada assessors will meet with a variety of staff, community partners and Board of Health members to ensure Baby-Friendly messages are consistent. Assessors will attend OPH events and programs to look for an environment that supports breastfeeding practices and informed infant feeding decision-making.

Strengthening OPH's organizational capacity to protect, promote and support breastfeeding

Strengthening the internal capacity of Board of Health members, OPH staff, volunteers and students to protect, promote and support the provision of breastmilk will benefit work with stakeholders, clients and community partners. During the process of achieving Baby-Friendly designation, OPH has reviewed and developed policies outlining how the organization protects, promotes and supports breastfeeding, including a policy to support breastfeeding employees. All OPH resources, communications, and professional client interactions have been reviewed to ensure consistent information is provided to parents. Furthermore, program planning is being given a Baby-Friendly lens to ensure that all relevant OPH programs and services meet the principles and practices of the Baby-Friendly Initiative.

All OPH staff, volunteers and students are participating in the required training to increase knowledge, skills and professional competence regarding the promotion of breastfeeding. Interested Board members are invited to complete the training, which is available [on-line](#) through the *Best Start* Resource Centre. Should assessors wish to meet with Board members during on-site visits, OPH Baby-Friendly staff will be available to provide information and support. Site visits are planned for October and December; however meetings with Board members will be part of the assessment in December.

Demonstrating leadership in the community

OPH works with many community agencies to plan and deliver breastfeeding support services for families with new babies and young children. Achieving Baby-Friendly designation will demonstrate that the Board of Health and OPH champion informed decision-making regarding infant feeding and are committed to helping Ottawa families achieve their breastfeeding goals. Knowledge gained by OPH as progress is made towards achieving Baby-Friendly status will be shared with community agencies and other organizations seeking designation.

Ensuring accessibility of evidence-based information on infant feeding practices

Many women make infant feeding decisions before or during pregnancy. OPH supports pre-conception and prenatal informed decision-making:

- Providing breastfeeding information in all prenatal programming, which is available on-line, in class and through Pregnancy Circles offered to vulnerable clients
- Offering information regarding infant formula on a one-to-one basis once an informed decision has been made
- Providing resources through prenatal home visits , OPHIL tele-nursing services, postpartum telephone calls following hospital discharge and information packages provided to prenatal and postpartum mothers
- Discussing breastfeeding when women call OPHIL tele-nursing services inquiring into prenatal classes and promoting attendance to the community prenatal breastfeeding classes
- Providing on-going training services to prenatal teachers and public health nurses
- Advising mothers of community services that support the provision of breastmilk and breastfeeding, including breastfeeding support drop-ins, which are offered by certified lactation consultants, Well-Baby Drop-Ins and Baby Express
- Providing OPH's Ottawa Breastfeeding Buddies peer support program
- Offering home visits to mothers experiencing breastfeeding problems
- Working with many community partners including prenatal educators, lactation services, hospitals and community health centres to provide consistent, reliable messaging on infant care practices, including the provision of breastmilk.

Working with partners and next steps

In 2011, OPH hosted the "Ottawa Breastfeeding Support Symposium". Participants included hospitals, Community Health and Resource Centres, breastfeeding support agencies, community groups and lactation consultants. Recommendations regarding enhancing programs and services were identified: ensuring a smooth hospital to home transition for postpartum women and families, having a sole source of breastfeeding information for Ottawa residents, integrating breastfeeding services, improving data collection, coordinating Baby-Friendly Initiative designation, reaching out to physicians, and normalizing breastfeeding.

OPH has followed through on many of the symposium's recommendations by expanding data collection by tracking breastfeeding rates of Ottawa mothers at six and

12 months postpartum. Alternative models of harmonized Well-Baby and Breastfeeding Support Drop-Ins are being explored. In 2012, OPH expanded its partnership with Ottawa Public Library to offer Baby Express, which provides Well-Baby Drop-In Services and an opportunity to expose parents and caregivers to the importance of early literacy.

OPH has worked closely with the City of Ottawa Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services to ensure that all staff is aware of the importance of breastfeeding and that women can feed their babies in public areas of recreation facilities. OPH has also partnered with several local shopping centres to host Breastfeeding Challenge events. These large-scale events hosted hundreds of breastfeeding women and their children with the aim of normalizing breastfeeding.

In addition, there are a number of other health agencies in Ottawa that are pursuing Baby-Friendly designation. To date, Somerset-West and Centretown Community Health Centre have received their certificates, and some area hospitals are also working toward Baby-Friendly designation. Working together with a shared vision contributes to ensuring that consistent and evidence-based information is provided to families. Additional recommendations continue to be discussed through the Champlain-Maternal Newborn Regional Program Breastfeeding Promotion Committee, which OPH chairs, as well as various planning tables.

CONSULTATION

OPH's progress towards achieving Baby Friendly designation and breastfeeding promotion has been informed by community partners. As OPH moves forward, partners will continue to be engaged through various committees including the Champlain Maternal Newborn Regional Program and the "Ontario Baby-Friendly Initiative in Community Health Services" Committee.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risks associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications related to the recommendations of this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

Information Technology Services has assisted Ottawa Public Health to engage an external resource to develop a database system to consistently collect data and report as required to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

BOARD OF HEALTH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The recommendations in this report support the Board of Health Strategic Priorities:

- Increasing nutrition skills in priority populations (B1)
- Increasing programming to support healthy child development (D4)
- Applying a health lens to all municipal policies (A1)
- Increasing community participation and engagement (A4)

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The recommendations in this report support the Term of Council Priority: Healthy and Caring Communities

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

[Document 1- Integrated 10 Steps & WHO Code Practice Outcome Indicators for Hospitals and Community Health Services: Summary](#)

DOCUMENTS À L'APPUI

[Document 1 - Indicateurs de résultats pour les Dix Conditions pour le succès de l'allaitement, intégrés pour les hôpitaux et les services de santé communautaire: Résumé](#)

DISPOSITION

Ottawa Public Health, in collaboration with community partners and City of Ottawa Departments, will work towards achieving Baby-Friendly designation. Ottawa Public Health will continue to consult all relevant City departments, including Legal Counsel in the City Clerk and Solicitor Department on agreements between the Board of Health and outside organizations, as well as the implementation of this initiative.