



2014 Breastfeeding Initiatives Update

Breastfeeding is a public health issue and not just a lifestyle choice.

--American Academy of Pediatrics

Improving the health of Cole County citizens is a primary goal of the Cole County Health Department (CCHD). Protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding, with its many health benefits for infants, children, and mothers, is a key strategy toward this goal. Breastfeeding benefits public health by decreasing infectious diseases, reducing infant mortality and preventing obesity long term.

There are many ways that communities support families to breastfeed, and everyone plays a role.

A woman's ability to reach her breastfeeding goal is affected by a host of factors including support from her family, community, employer and health system.

What data exists for Cole County?

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services provides current data specific to Cole County through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

CCHD WIC data for 2013 indicates that 68.3% of WIC participants initiated breastfeeding in Cole County compared to 62.8% in 2010.

While this rate is above the state WIC rate of 65.7% it still remains well below the 2020 Healthy People goal of 81.9%.

18% of CCHD WIC participants were still breastfeeding at 6 months. While this rate is above the state WIC rate of 14.9% it continues to remain well below the 2020 Healthy People goal of 60.6%.

These increases are a direct reflection of the community initiatives that have been implemented over the past four years.

How does WIC support breastfeeding?

The CCHD WIC Program has an extensive breastfeeding program for its participants. Benefits of the program include: an enhanced food package; prenatal/postpartum breastfeeding education, support and assistance; electric breast pump loan program; and personal pumps (manual and electric) based on individual need and breastfeeding status. The CCHD WIC Program has IBCLCs, breastfeeding peer counselors and registered dietitians to provide all levels of breastfeeding education, assessments, assistance and support. This includes a full time breastfeeding clinic and after hours phone support. CCHD WIC is a Baby Friendly WIC Clinic.

Who are the community partners?

In March 2010, the Cole County Breastfeeding Coalition (CCBC) was established with a mission to improve the community breastfeeding infrastructure.

Members include: Capital Region Medical Center (CRMC), Capital Region OB/GYN and Pediatric Associates, Cole County Health Department (CCHD), Jefferson City Medical Group Pediatrics, La Leche League, St. Mary's Health Center (SMHC), St. Mary's Pediatrics, and Whaley's Pharmacy.

Initially, the coalition identified many breastfeeding barriers in the community. Research indicates that most women choose to breastfeed but many do not reach their personal goals. The coalition agreed this was a direct reflection on the current environment and how it's designed.

CCBC continues to meet regularly in an ongoing effort to improve the community infrastructure to support breastfeeding.

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What barriers were identified by CCBC and how were they addressed?

Lack of Access to Breastfeeding Help

The Lactation Resource Guide (*LRG) was developed and is maintained by CCHD. Health professionals are encouraged to give this to all pregnant and breastfeeding women in an effort to link them with breastfeeding education, help and support.

Lack of Training for Health Professionals

Health professionals need on-going breastfeeding training to educate, support, and assist pregnant and breastfeeding women appropriately. Trainings have been provided to physicians and nurses annually since 2010 through CCHD WIC funding. Trainings are designed to provide evidence based information for health professionals on maternity care practices that best support breastfeeding and to gain the needed skills to help and refer women appropriately.

Lack of Mother to Mother Support

Research shows that women are more successful when they have good support systems in place. Mother to mother support has been shown to increase both initiation and duration rates of breastfeeding. Cole County has many "Nursing Moms Meetings" available. See the *LRG for more information or find us on face book at "Cole County Breastfeeding Support Groups".

Worksite Support

Barriers mothers have identified in the workplace include a lack of flexibility for milk expression, lack of accommodations to pump or store breast milk, and concerns about support from employers and coworkers. As part of the 2010 Health Care Reform, a new breastfeeding law was passed.

Lack of Public Awareness

Over the past four years, the CCHD WIC Program has funded a media campaign to raise public awareness about the importance of breastfeeding. Breastfeeding bags are provided to both hospitals which are given to all breastfeeding women when they deliver.

How do families find an IBCLC?

International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) are on staff at CRMC, SMHC and CCHD to provide breastfeeding assessments and assistance to breastfeeding women. See the *LRG to locate an IBCLC. These health care facilities, including Whaley's Pharmacy, also have trained staff available to assist and refer families.

What did we accomplish for 2013?

Congratulations to CRMC for receiving the Show Me 5 designation. CRMC, a Show Me 5 pilot hospital was the first to complete the application process in Missouri. With grant funding CCHD coordinated technical assistance and breastfeeding training for nurses and administrative staff at CRMC and SMHC to assist them in reaching this goal.

Daycares in Cole County were provided breastfeeding trainings to increase their awareness of the important role they play in supporting employed breastfeeding mothers.

What's new for 2014?

CCHD will provide technical assistance to employers to qualify for the Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Award.

The Chocolate Milk Café will begin which is designed to target the needs of African American and black women.

CCHD will continue to provide training to health care and daycare providers in Cole County.