

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 May 16

BABY-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 069-13 re “Baby-Friendly Initiative” be received for information.

Key Points

- The Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) is a global evidence-based strategy that promotes, protects, and supports the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding. All health units in Ontario are required to work towards achievement of Baby-Friendly designation, and the Middlesex-London Health Unit is in the process of working towards this.
- Implementation targets that have been achieved to date relate to orientation to the Baby-Friendly organization policy, staff education, resource and curricula review for BFI compliance, data collection planning and community outreach.

Background

Breastfeeding increases the health and development of infants and children, and provides health, social, and economic advantages to women, families, and society in general. Current recommendations from the World Health Organization include exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, with continued breastfeeding up to two years and beyond. The Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) is a global evidence-based strategy that promotes, protects, and supports the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care selected Baby-Friendly designation as an Accountability Agreement Performance Indicator for all public health units in Ontario. The Health Unit signed a Certificate of Intent to begin the implementation process in November 2011. The implementation process has clearly defined steps laid out by both the Ministry and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, the national designation authority.

Progress Update on the Implementation of the Baby-Friendly Initiative at MLHU

The implementation process for the BFI includes a comprehensive mix of policy development and implementation, staff education, review and revision of curricula and resources, practice changes, data collection and community outreach. The implementation plan identified early in 2012 has been successful in leading the Health Unit through these requirements. Achievements to date:

- The Board of Health (BOH) endorsed the Baby-Friendly Organization Policy 2-080 in October 2012 (see [Report No. 119-12](#)). The BOH received an initial orientation to the policy, an overview of the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada’s BFI 10 Steps Practice Outcome Indicators, and were informed of BOH responsibilities within the Baby-Friendly Initiative.
- Policy summary posters/plaques have been mounted in most teaching rooms and waiting areas, with the remainder to be mounted by the end of May.

- Orientation to the Baby-Friendly Organization Policy is nearly complete for all staff and volunteers, with 100% completion expected by the end of May.
- All staff working directly with prenatal and postpartum women and families ('direct care providers') have participated in intensive education, with additional skill development sessions planned for June.
- All other staff and volunteers working at the Health Unit ('indirect care providers') are in the process of completing education that will provide basic breastfeeding and BFI information, with the expectation that this education will be completed by the end of June.
- Almost 600 print resources for young families, as well as the Prenatal Education curricula, have been reviewed to determine consistency with Baby-Friendly principles.
- A data collection plan has been developed.
- Community outreach is resulting in growing momentum as community partners are working with nurses to develop capacity related to Baby-Friendly practices and improving the connection between organizations that serve young families.
- The BFI Advisory Group has met twice, with another meeting planned for this spring.
- Health Unit staff members are integrating Baby-Friendly Initiative concepts into their work (e.g., Communications added 'BFI compliance' to their communication checklist; a breastfeeding pamphlet was incorporated into emergency preparedness materials).

Next Steps/Conclusion

Over the coming months, orientation to the organization policy and Baby-Friendly Initiative education for all staff who are indirect care providers will be completed. Policy and education requirements will be integrated into Human Resource processes for new Health Unit employees. The revision of resources for young families will be completed. A Baby-Friendly 'Resource Compliance Checklist' will be disseminated across the whole agency to prompt all service areas to consider Baby-Friendly principles in resource development and acquisition.

The Health Unit will continue to partner with provincial groups, supporting the development of a provincial breastfeeding surveillance system, and implementation of the Baby-Friendly Initiative within many hospitals in the Southwest region. Locally, the Health Unit will continue its work with other London and Middlesex agencies and groups who work with prenatal and young families with an ultimate goal of building more support for breastfeeding in the community.

The Health Unit is progressing toward achieving key requirements set out by both the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada.

This report was prepared by Ms. Laura Dueck, Public Health Nurse, and Ms. Heather Lokko, Manager, Reproductive Health Team.

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<p>This report addresses the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Child Health, Requirement #4, #7 and an Area of Focus: Facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of the Public Health Accountability Agreement</p>
