

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2014 February 26

BABY-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health endorse the proposed Baby-Friendly organizational policy changes as outlined in Report No. 016-14 re Baby-Friendly Initiative.

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 Ontario Health Units are required to work towards achievement of Baby-Friendly designation.
- Implementation targets related to organizational policy orientation, staff education, resource and curricula review for BFI compliancy, data collection planning and community outreach have been met so far. This Health Unit began the formal BFI designation process in November 2013.
- Our Baby-Friendly Organization Policy has been revised and requires review and endorsement by the Board of Health (BOH). BOH members must complete an annual orientation to this policy.

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 advise 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

The implementation process for the Baby-Friendly Initiative includes a comprehensive mix of policy 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, and preparing the Health Unit to begin the BFI designation process.

The following steps have been taken since the Baby-Friendly Organization Policy 2-070 was endorsed and BOH members received an initial orientation to the policy ([Report 119-12](#)):

1. The Baby-Friendly Organization Policy has recently been reviewed and enhanced to provide further guidance related to key BFI practices. This revised policy currently requires review and endorsement from the Board of Health, and it will be presented at the February 26th meeting.
2. All staff and most volunteers have completed policy orientation and education activities, with BFI requirements integrated into new staff /volunteer orientation activities through Human Resources.
3. Staff working directly with prenatal and postpartum women and families ('direct care providers') have received continuing breastfeeding and BFI education and skill development.
4. All prenatal and young families' resources and curricula have been revised as needed. A Baby-Friendly 'Resource Compliancy Checklist' was disseminated across the agency to support all service areas in considering Baby-Friendly principles in resource development and acquisition.
5. MLHU staff continues to integrate Baby-Friendly practices into their work.
6. Implementation of the data collection/analysis plan is in progress. The final report will highlight current breastfeeding initiation and duration rates for our community, and will provide further details related to Baby-Friendly practices such as hospital formula use and skin-to-skin practices.
7. The BFI Advisory Group has allowed for internal and external stakeholder input into MLHU's Baby-Friendly Initiative implementation. As we move into the BFI designation process, the Advisory Group will meet annually to support review of the Health Unit's Baby-Friendly Organization Policy.
8. MLHU is involved in BFI initiatives locally, regionally, and provincially.
9. Several binders of materials were collated and sent to our Breastfeeding Committee for Canada Assessor and a BFI Ontario representative at the end of 2013, to begin our Document Review.

Next Steps

We look forward to receiving feedback from our Breastfeeding Committee for Canada Assessor regarding the documents submitted for the Document Review, the first step in the formal Baby-Friendly designation process. Once this feedback is reviewed, we will address the recommendations and plan for our Pre-Assessment Site Visit. We anticipate achieving Baby-Friendly designation in 2015.

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



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Medical Officer of Health

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