



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

DATE: 2015 April 16

BABY-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health approve and endorse the proposed Baby-Friendly organizational policy changes as outlined in Report No. 027-15 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, and is currently preparing for the final stage of External Assessment.
- Our Baby-Friendly Organization Policy has been revised and requires approval 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 (BCC), 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 for the BFI designation process. In November 2013 the Health Unit began the first step in the formal designation process called Pre-Assessment, consisting of a thorough document review and a preliminary site visit by one BFI Assessor from the BCC. We are currently preparing for the second phase in the formal designation process called External Assessment.

The following steps have been taken since the BOH received their last annual re-orientation to the Baby-Friendly Organization Policy ([Report 016-14](#)):

1. We received a report from the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada on our Pre-Assessment Document Review, and implemented a plan to address the recommendations.
2. Our Pre-Assessment Site Visit was planned and implemented on September 29th. At this visit, one BFI Assessor met with key staff and administrators, toured the 50 King Street office, interviewed 17 staff members, visited a Well Baby/Child and Breastfeeding Clinic, and provided the Health Unit with a written report and recommendations.
3. The Baby-Friendly Organization Policy was reviewed and enhanced. This revised policy currently requires approval and endorsement from the Board of Health, and it will be presented at the April 16th meeting ([Appendix A](#)).
4. All new staff continue to complete a policy orientation and education activities appropriate to their role, and most existing staff received a refresher education session prior to the preliminary site visit in September.
5. All MLHU staff continue to integrate Baby-Friendly best practices into their work, and staff working directly with prenatal and postpartum women and families continue to receive breastfeeding and BFI education and skill-building related to integrating Baby-Friendly into their current practice.
6. Data collection and analysis was completed through an LHSC-MLHU Collaborative Breastfeeding Survey. This information provided the baseline data for us to build upon with our Baby-Friendly implementation over the past year.
7. The BFI Advisory Group held their annual meeting in December 2014, which allowed for internal and external stakeholder input into MLHU's Baby-Friendly Initiative implementation, including a review of the Health Unit's Baby-Friendly Organization Policy.
8. MLHU is involved in BFI initiatives locally, regionally, and provincially. The Health Unit is well supported by community partners in our efforts to obtain designation.

There has also been significant movement within the province through the Ontario BFI Strategy, whose goal is to provide hospitals and community health organizations with the training, tools and guidance to achieve BFI designation.

Next Steps

We have implemented a plan to address the BCC Assessor's recommendations from the Pre-Assessment Site Visit. Of particular attention will be the planning and implementation of an ongoing infant feeding surveillance system. We anticipate that our formal BFI External Assessment will occur in the fall of 2015.

This report was prepared by Ms. Laura Dueck, Public Health Nurse, and Ms. Ruby Brewer, Program Manager, Early Years Team.



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Medical Officer of Health

This report addresses the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards (2014):
Child Health, Requirement #4, #7
Area of Focus: Facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of the Public Health Accountability Agreement