

PROJECT BRIEF

Milwaukee County Breastfeeding Coalition

Background

Breast milk is widely acknowledged to be the most complete form of nutrition for infants and the resulting benefits for infants' health, growth, immunity, and development are well documented.¹ The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes that "breastfeeding ensures the best possible health as well as the best developmental and psychosocial outcomes for the infant."² However, studies indicate that breastfeeding rates are significantly lower for African American, low-income, younger and less-educated women. According to the Wisconsin WIC Program (which serves low-income and primarily African American families), 9 of the 13 WIC clinics in Milwaukee are below the statewide average of 62% for incidence of breastfeeding, ranging from 41.4% to 62.7%. This rate is far below the Healthy Wisconsin 2010 Plan goal of 80%.¹ In addition, duration rates for breastfeeding infants at 6 and 12 months are well below the health plan goal of 50% for six months and 25% for 12 months¹.

Goal

Improve the health and nutrition of infants in Milwaukee County by increasing breastfeeding rates, including initiation, duration, and exclusivity, and to change social norms regarding the importance of breastfeeding.

Strategies/Objectives

1. Increase community engagement in project goals, design, implementation, and evaluation;
2. Increase awareness of the importance of breastfeeding through targeted educational outreach and social marketing strategies;
3. Implement individual support and education for breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity through expanded use of WIC Peer Counselors and elements of the Loving Support model; and
4. Build the capacity and infrastructure of the Milwaukee County Breastfeeding Coalition through development of a website that disseminates resources, information, and education for the

community and creation and implementation of a sustainability plan.

Intended Outcomes

1. Breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity will meet the goals of the Statewide Health Plan; and
2. Social norms will become more supportive of breastfeeding in Milwaukee County.

Timeline

January 2010 – December 2010

Funding Source

Wisconsin Partnership Program

Reference

¹Healthy People 2010. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Available at: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/>.

²Mitra, A.K., Khoury, A.J., Carothers, C., Foretich, C. The Loving Support Breastfeeding Campaign: Awareness and Practices of Health Care Providers in Mississippi. *JOGNN Clinical Research*, 2003, vol. 32;6, 753-760.

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