

# State Health Departments Provide Community-Based Breastfeeding Support

**Breastfeeding is the very best method** for infant feeding and is healthier in the long term for both mothers and babies.<sup>1</sup> Community-based strategies are an effective way to promote and provide support for breastfeeding duration and exclusivity.<sup>2,3</sup> In 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity awarded supplemental funding to six state health departments to put into place community-based breastfeeding strategies. Examples of strategies included: breastfeeding-friendly practices in clinics, mother-to-mother support programs, breastfeeding education and professional support for health care professionals, support for breastfeeding in the workplace, and access to breastfeeding resources for new mothers.<sup>4</sup>

## What was accomplished?\*



Reached more than **30,000** breastfeeding mothers



Provided breastfeeding support services in a variety of settings such as clinics, businesses, and child care centers



Partnered with more than **600** community-based organizations

The New York State Department of Health worked with partners to provide breastfeeding support in Erie County communities of color through **12** participating organizations and reached a total of **8,550** breastfeeding mothers.

The California Department of Public Health supported **15** community health clinic organizations to serve low-income women of color in **11** counties, reaching **3,108** breastfeeding mothers.

The Washington State Department of Health worked with **8** health centers, serving predominantly Latino and Native American communities, to pilot an evidence-based breastfeeding support program. The program reached **2,346** breastfeeding mothers and will be implemented statewide.

Michigan Department of Community Health worked with **9** local breastfeeding coalitions to establish or expand breastfeeding support groups and to develop breastfeeding resources for mothers and health professionals. Coalitions represented **7** counties across Michigan.

Indiana State Department of Health worked with Walgreens to train pharmacists to provide easy and accessible drop-in lactation support at Indianapolis pharmacies.

To reach more mothers, Massachusetts Department of Public Health worked with communities to promote breastfeeding support programs via social media.

\*For more information on state specific accomplishments and activities, please see the *Journal of Human Lactation: Special Issue on a CDC Initiative to Improve Community-Based Support for Breastfeeding*. November 2015; Vol. 31, No. 4

# What you can do to improve community-based support for breastfeeding

## Community-based breastfeeding practitioners can:

- Coordinate with state and local health departments and breastfeeding advocates to put into place community-based programs that support increasing breastfeeding duration and exclusivity.
- Work with community-based clinics and provider offices to help them implement breastfeeding-friendly practices in their facilities.
- Provide mentoring opportunities for individuals working toward becoming International Board Certified Lactation Consultants or for Certified Lactation Counselors and peer counselors wanting to improve their skills.
- Provide training and continuing education opportunities for lactation consultants, lactation counselors/educators, and peer counselors.
- Work with hospitals and community breastfeeding support sites (e.g., Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program clinics, community support groups) to set up referral systems for women to access breastfeeding resources upon leaving the hospital with their baby.

## CDC grantees and partners can:

- Provide training and technical assistance to community-based breastfeeding organizations, hospitals, community-based clinics, and worksites.
- Establish linkages between maternity hospitals, birthing centers, and community-based breastfeeding support programs to promote post-discharge support.
- Present program examples, lessons learned, and practice-based strategies via webinars, stories from the field, or published manuscripts.
- Coordinate breastfeeding support efforts between local breastfeeding professionals such as Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program peer counselors, International Board Certified Lactation Consultants, and Certified Lactation Counselors in the community.
- Collaborate with existing breastfeeding support programs and health clinics in the community to leverage resources and support.

## The CDC is:

- Supporting state health departments to help communities improve breastfeeding support.
- Supporting local health departments and community-based public, private, non-profit, and/or faith-based organizations to provide services to breastfeeding mothers and their infants in predominantly African American communities.
- Creating peer learning communities among funded programs and partners to enhance breastfeeding support and capacity in communities.

## Want to learn more?

Visit [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/state-local-programs/breastfeeding.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/state-local-programs/breastfeeding.html)

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## References

1. American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). Breastfeeding, Family Physicians Supporting (Position Paper). 2014. <http://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/breastfeeding-support.html>. Accessed November 23, 2015.
2. Special issue on a CDC initiative to improve community-based support for breastfeeding. J Hum Lact. 2015;31(4)
3. Renfrew MJ, McCormick FM, Wade A, Quinn B, Dowswell T. Support for healthy breastfeeding mothers with healthy term babies. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2012;5:Cd001141.
4. Special issue on a CDC initiative to improve community-based support for breastfeeding. J Hum Lact. 2015;31(4)