



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Breastfeeding Promotion in Toronto

Date:	September 5, 2007
To:	Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of Health about Toronto Public Health Breastfeeding Promotion activities, and to seek endorsement for the implementation of a Breastfeeding Friendly recognition symbol in Toronto.

Toronto Public Health offers a wide variety of programs and services that promote and support exclusive and sustained breastfeeding. This includes supporting mothers to breastfeed their children anytime and anywhere. There is wide variation in public attitudes toward breastfeeding in public. Creating a comfortable supportive environment for mothers to breastfeed whenever and wherever they choose will enable increased duration of breastfeeding which will benefit child health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health endorse the implementation of the Breastfeeding Friendly Recognition Symbol in Toronto as outlined in this report.

Financial Impact

The budget for the roll out of the Breastfeeding Friendly Recognition Symbol is included in the Toronto Public Health Operating Budget.

DECISION HISTORY

At its January 29, 2007 meeting, the Board of Health requested the Medical Officer of Health to explore the development of a Breastfeeding Friendly recognition symbol. At the June 12, 2007 meeting, the Board of Health requested the Medical Officer of Health,

in consultation with the Executive Director of Facilities and Real Estate, to provide a summary of City facilities that provide designated breastfeeding space; and to include information on the annual breastfeeding conference and breastfeeding challenge.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Breastfeeding is the best way to provide optimal nutrition and immunologic protection for the health, growth and development of infants and children. Toronto Public Health supports the World Health Organization (WHO) and Health Canada in recommending exclusive breastfeeding to six months of age followed by the introduction of appropriate complementary foods and continued breastfeeding to two years and beyond. Longer duration of breastfeeding improves the health of infants and children.

In June, 2007 Toronto City Council approved a policy that allows mothers to breastfeed anytime and anywhere in public places controlled by the City of Toronto.

COMMENTS

Breastfeeding Friendly Symbol

Toronto Public Health staff researched symbols and programs used in the promotion of breastfeeding friendly public places elsewhere in Ontario and Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. This review included consultation with key stakeholders in Toronto. The review considered both the adoption of an existing symbol and the development of a new symbol for Toronto.

Based on a range of factors, including recognition, cross-jurisdiction consistency, and cost, Toronto Public Health has adopted the “Breastfeeding Friendly – Anytime, Anywhere” symbol developed by Health Canada in collaboration with La Leche League Canada (see Attachment 1). The symbol received extensive consultation through the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada and focus testing. This symbol is part a series of posters and TV ads used in a promotional campaign across Canada. There are also supporting materials available such as fact sheets for restaurants and retail stores.

Other Public Health Units including Peel Region, Thunder Bay, Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington, Waterloo, and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada are currently using this symbol. Peel Health initiated a Breastfeeding Friendly program for restaurants in 2006. They have used the Health Canada Anytime, Anywhere materials and added a restaurant guide for staff (laminated and with adhesive strips for hanging). Toronto Public Health has received permission from Health Canada and Peel Health to reproduce and adapt their materials for use in Toronto.

Implementation of the Breastfeeding Friendly Symbol

Cost containment measures required by the City of Toronto have delayed implementation until 2008. The 2008 start date will be dependent upon future budget availability. When budget is available, implementation will be as follows:

Phase 1 – City Properties – March 2008

The Medical Officer of Health will send a letter and a Breastfeeding Friendly decal (recognition symbol) to all city owned and operated venues and ABC's. The letter will refer to the breastfeeding policy and request posting of the symbol.

Phase 2 – Restaurants – Spring 2008

Toronto Public Health will mail a package to 6,100 restaurants in Toronto. This estimated number includes food premises that prepare and sell food where seating is provided. The package will include:

- a letter from the Medical Officer of Health explaining the right to breastfeed and how to provide a welcoming environment for breastfeeding women and infants
- a static cling Breastfeeding Friendly decal
- an information sheet for restaurants from Health Canada; and
- a restaurant guide for staff (laminated with adhesive strips for hanging).

In addition, a website will be developed that will identify restaurants that are Breastfeeding Friendly places. A restaurant will be able to fill in a form on-line and email to Toronto Public Health indicating that they are Breastfeeding Friendly. Similar to the Eat Smart website, the public would have access to this list of Breastfeeding Friendly restaurants.

Phase 3 – Other Businesses - 2009

This phase involves the introduction of the Breastfeeding Friendly recognition symbol to retail businesses in Toronto. There are approximately 30,000 retail stores and 315 retail malls in Toronto. Toronto Public Health is investigating appropriate mechanisms to promote this program to the retail sector.

City Facilities with Designated Space for Breastfeeding

City of Toronto Facilities and Real Estate estimate that there are 1,200 sites owned or operated by the City of Toronto. Many of these sites are within Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Toronto Public Library. There are only a few separate designated breastfeeding sites in City facilities. There is a designated space in City Hall and the Etobicoke Civic Centre. At the East York Civic Centre the breastfeeding space is accessible to staff but the public need to be escorted. In Metro Hall and the other three Civic Centres, First Aid Rooms are used. There is a need for further discussion with Corporate Occupational Health and Safety regarding the use of first aid rooms for the public.

A process with multiple City partners (e.g. Facilities and Real Estate; Parks, Forestry and Recreation; Toronto Public Library and Toronto Public Health) will be undertaken to conduct an analysis of sites which are more likely to be visited by breastfeeding families and to develop clear guidelines for appropriate designated spaces for breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding Conference

Toronto hosted the 17th Annual National Breastfeeding Conference in June 2007. The conference is the result of a long-standing partnership between Toronto Public Health, INFACT Canada, and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. For 14 of the 17 years, the Humber Institute of Advanced Learning and Technology was a valuable member of the partnership.

The conference offers the combined perspective of public health, hospitals and social justice organizations. The conference strives to provide best practice information and the latest breastfeeding research from international speakers, as well as showcasing Canadian breastfeeding experts. Since 1991, the conference has grown from a one-day seminar with 100 attendees to a two-day event with 300-350 attendees.

Breastfeeding Challenge

Background

The Annual Breastfeeding Challenge is sponsored by the Quintessence Foundation, a Canadian foundation established in 1998 focusing on breastfeeding education to health professionals and the public through a variety of venues. The original intent of the Breastfeeding Challenge was to highlight the benefits and value of breastfeeding.

The 2001 Breastfeeding Challenge was a challenge to the Guinness Book of World Records. In 2001, there were 846 children breastfeeding at 26 sites in North America. In 2006, there were 4,691 children breastfeeding in 156 sites in North America. The Breastfeeding Challenge is traditionally held on the first Saturday in October, or the last Saturday in September.

The goal of the Challenge is to celebrate breastfeeding and demonstrate promotion, protection and support for breastfeeding women and families. It is an opportunity for education and peer support in a fun and social way.

The 2007 Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge will seek to establish the most children breastfeeding on September 29, 2007 at 11:00 am (local time) in one geographic area (Province, City, State, or Territory) as a percentage of birth rate. All sites must register individually. To be “counted” in the official numbers for the challenge, participants must be present at the registered site.

Toronto Public Health Involvement:

The Breastfeeding Challenge is a collaborative effort between Toronto Public Health and the Chinese/Vietnamese Breastfeeding Network (membership includes Toronto Public Health, private Lactation Consultants, Mt. Sinai Hospital, South Riverdale Community Health Centre, Babies Best Start, Vietnamese Women’s Association and La Leche League).

This is the third year Toronto Public Health has co-hosted this competition in Toronto. In 2005 and 2006, we placed second in Ontario. In 2006, there was a 30% increase in

attendance (2005 – 77 babies and in 2006 – 104 babies). In 2005 and 2006 Dr. Jack Newman was the keynote speaker.

The format for 2007 includes several concurrent sessions of interest to moms (i.e. Breastfeeding Q & A with a Lactation Consultant, Baby Sign Language demonstration, Baby Sling/Carrier Demonstration, Infant Massage, Infant CPR/First Aid, Mother Goose Rhymes and Songs).

In 2007, the promotion of the event includes:

- Mail out of posters to a variety of community agencies including Community Health Centres, Ontario Early Years Centres, Libraries, Breastfeeding Clinics and Toronto Civic Centres.
- Individual contact with clients at home visits, prenatal and parent groups
- Toronto Public Health website
- Exhibition Place Pixel Board
- La Leche League local distribution
- Local mom specific websites/blogs
- Press release

This year's event will be on Saturday September 29, 2007 at the North York Civic Centre, Council Chambers.

The rules for the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge are clear about participants being physically present at the single registered site. This does not eliminate the possibility of including numerous participating sites in Toronto. The Toronto Breastfeeding Challenge Committee will explore this option when planning for next year's Challenge.

CONTACT

Donalda McCabe, Healthy Families Director
Reproductive & Infant Health
Toronto Public Health
Tel: 416-338-1256 Fax: 416-392-0713
e-mail: dmcca@toronto.ca

Joanne Gilmore
Healthy Families Manager
Toronto Public Health
Tel: 416-338-8708 Fax: 416-338-1780
e-mail: jgilmore@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Dr. David McKeown
Medical Officer of Health

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Breastfeeding Friendly Recognition Symbol

Breastfeeding Friendly



ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.



Health
Canada

Santé
Canada



TORONTO Public Health