



## STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

### Baby Friendly Initiative Update 2013

<b>Date:</b>	January 28, 2013
<b>To:</b>	Board of Health
<b>From:</b>	Medical Officer of Health
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### **SUMMARY**

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This report is the third in a series of reports related to the status of breastfeeding promotion and support in Toronto. In 2010, a breastfeeding study conducted by Toronto Public Health (TPH) clearly demonstrated the important role that hospitals and community agencies play in a mother's decision to initiate and continue to breastfeed. This resulted in a number of recommendations for both TPH and Toronto birthing hospitals, including one for TPH and the hospitals to work towards achievement of Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) designation through the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada. Toronto Public Health has continued to monitor and report on the status of BFI designation.

Toronto Public Health is pleased to advise the Board that it has been granted Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) designation by the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada. This designation is for five years. TPH is the largest health unit in Canada to achieve designation and the eighth health unit in Ontario to be awarded this status.

With respect to the designation status of Toronto's ten birthing hospitals, Toronto East General Hospital remains the only BFI designated hospital. Over the past year, the other nine Toronto birthing hospitals have continued their efforts to put policies and practices in place which are supportive of breastfeeding. Toronto Public Health continues to work with them to support their efforts.

#### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

A report entitled "Supporting Breastfeeding in Toronto" (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-901.pdf>) was received by the Board of Health at its January 2007 meeting. This report called for the establishment of a breastfeeding report card for the City of Toronto. In response to this request, in March 2010, the Board of Health received a report entitled "Breastfeeding in Toronto: Promoting Supportive Environments". This report described the results of a breastfeeding study which determined breastfeeding rates across all Toronto birthing hospitals and their compliance with BFI requirements. The Medical Officer of Health was directed to work towards TPH achievement of BFI designation, support hospitals with their achievement of BFI designation and to report back annually on the status of both. A report entitled "Breastfeeding Baby Friendly Initiative Update" provided a status update in March 2011. The 2012 update was deferred pending the outcome of TPH's designation process.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The benefits of breastfeeding for both infant and mother are well documented. Exclusive breastfeeding to six months with the introduction of complementary foods at six months and continued breastfeeding for two years of life and beyond is recommended by a number of organizations including The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Health Canada, and the World Health Organization.

The Ontario Public Health Standards require health units to work with partners to use a comprehensive health promotion approach to advancing and supporting breastfeeding. As an indicator of achievement related to this Standard, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) requires each health unit, as part of their Accountability Agreement with the Province, to achieve Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) designation.

BFI is an internationally recognized designation. The goal of BFI is to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates by protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding through implementation of best practices. "The Baby-Friendly Initiative, an integrated initiative for hospitals and community health services (based on the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative), provides ten evidence-based steps to optimally support maternal-child health for all mothers and babies" (BCC, 2012). The national authority for BFI in Canada is the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada (BCC).

Toronto Public Health began its pursuit of BFI designation following the completion of a breastfeeding study in 2009. The results of this study were summarized in a report entitled "Breastfeeding in Toronto: Promoting Supportive Environments". The report found that almost all first time mothers initiated breastfeeding in hospital (95.7%). However, less than 20 percent (17.5%) of mothers who initiated breastfeeding continued to exclusively breastfeed their babies to six months (Toronto Public Health, 2010). The report also highlighted the critical role that hospital and community agencies play in supporting mothers to both initiate and continue to breastfeed.

Best practices for hospitals and community agencies are clearly articulated by BCC in the “BFI Integrated Ten Steps Practice Outcome Indicators for Hospitals and Community Health Services” (The Ten Steps). This document provides a single set of criteria for hospitals and community health settings working towards BFI designation/re-designation. These steps include the requirement for a written BFI policy, training for all staff on implementation of the policy, information to mothers to make an informed decision about breastfeeding, support to mothers to initiate and continue to breastfeed, compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (The Code), and establishment of a continuum of care from hospital to community.

These best practices highlight the importance of health units to, not only achieve their own BFI designation, but to work with their community partners on their designation. Toronto Public Health has been working with Toronto's ten birthing hospitals since 2009, to support and monitor their efforts towards designation. As part of this process, TPH has reported annually to the Board of Health on the status of local hospital designation.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Toronto Public Health BFI Designation**

Toronto Public Health is pleased to advise the Board that it has been granted Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) designation by the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada. This designation is for five years. TPH is the largest health unit in Canada to achieve designation and the eighth health unit in Ontario to be awarded this status.

Preparation for the BFI designation process has included the development of a comprehensive TPH BFI Compliance Policy and related procedures, training for all staff on the Policy, establishment of baseline breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates through completion of an infant feeding study, a review of all TPH resources to ensure compliance with The Code, and advancement of our community based breastfeeding clinics to ensure at least a basic level of community breastfeeding support service.

In April 2012, TPH successfully completed the Pre-assessment phase of the designation process. A BCC assessor visited various TPH offices and community sites to conduct interviews with Healthy Families and Intake staff. The purpose of these interviews was to gauge their understanding of key BFI concepts such as knowledge of The Code, informed decision making and breastfeeding management issues. The assessor also met with the Medical Officer of Health and key senior management staff to assess TPH's commitment to the BFI concepts.

This January, TPH underwent the final phase of designation, an external assessment by BCC assessors. The four assessors conducted a comprehensive document review and visited TPH offices and sites in the community to interview both staff and clients. In addition, initial BFI designation requires a minimum 75% total breastfeeding rate at entry to service. Toronto Public Health was pleased to report that, based on the 2012 infant feeding study, Toronto has a 93% breastfeeding initiation rate at hospital discharge.

The BCC External Assessment was completed on January 18, 2013. The formal report has yet to be received, but TPH has been informed that it has been awarded BFI designation. This award was based on a strong BFI policy, a high level of knowledge among staff, evidence-based parent information and service protocols, and full compliance with The Code. Clients described TPH breastfeeding services as client-centered, well informed, respectful of diversity, and TPH service delivery sites were described as welcoming and supportive of breastfeeding mothers.

## **Toronto Birthing Hospitals' BFI Designation Update**

TPH has worked collaboratively with its hospital partners on a number of breastfeeding initiatives, including expanding breastfeeding clinic services across the city and supporting some hospitals in their BFI journeys.

In order to assess the BFI status of the birthing hospitals in Toronto, an informal self-report questionnaire based on The Ten Steps was sent to each of them. All ten hospitals responded to the questionnaire. Toronto East General Hospital remains the only hospital to have achieved BFI designation. However, each of the nine other hospitals has demonstrated some progress towards compliance with The Ten Steps.

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care providers and volunteers.
  - Eight of ten hospitals reported having a breastfeeding policy. The remaining two indicated that they were in the process of drafting theirs.
2. Ensure all health care providers have the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the breastfeeding policy.
  - Six of ten hospitals indicated that their staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the breastfeeding policy. Two hospitals have trained specific staff only and one hospital is in the process of training their staff
3. Inform pregnant women and their families about the importance and process of breastfeeding.
  - There was 100% compliance with this indicator. Informing pregnant women and their families about the importance and process of breastfeeding takes a variety of forms, including at prenatal classes, in physicians' offices and through written literature.
4. Place babies in uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact with their mothers immediately following birth for at least an hour or until completion of the first feeding or as long as the mother wishes: encourage mothers to recognize when their babies are ready to feed, offering help as needed.
  - Seven out of ten hospitals are compliant with this indicator, although one hospital specified that this practice is limited to vaginal deliveries and some caesarean deliveries. Two hospitals report that they are in the process of introducing the concept of skin to skin to their staff and do not have full compliance yet.

5. Assist mothers to breastfeed and maintain lactation should they face challenges including separation from their infants.
  - Nine out of ten hospitals responded positively to this indicator. One hospital advised that there are some cases where formula is given as an interim measure.
6. Support mothers to exclusively breastfeed for the first 6 months, unless supplements are medically indicated.
  - Nine out of ten hospitals report that they support mothers in this regard. However, one of these hospitals identified that they have a high supplementation rate and one reported that they are not fully compliant with this indicator as their support is limited to the first 24 hours and early clinic visits.
7. Facilitate 24-hour rooming-in for all mother-infant dyads: mothers and infants remain together.
  - There is 100% compliance with this indicator.
8. Encourage baby-led or cue-based breastfeeding. Encourage sustained breastfeeding beyond six months with appropriate introduction of complementary foods.
  - Nine out of ten hospitals reported that they adhere to this practice.
9. Support mothers to feed and care for their breastfeeding babies without the use of artificial teats or pacifiers (dummies or soothers).
  - Nine out of ten hospitals report that they are not using artificial teats and pacifiers. One hospital reported partially implementing this indicator as pacifiers are rare but supplementation with a bottle is a common practice.
10. Provide a seamless transition between the services provided by the hospital, community health services and peer support programs. Apply principles of Primary health Care and Population health to support the continuum of care and implement strategies that affect the broad determinants that will improve breastfeeding outcomes.
  - All hospitals reported compliance with this indicator.

The most challenging requirement for BFI designation appears to be compliance with The Code. Only four out of ten hospitals reported compliance with The Code. The remaining six hospitals, while not fully Code compliant, reported compliance with some aspect(s) of The Code such as no formula posters displayed. Compliance with The Code is often a complex process that can have financial implications and requires endorsement from all levels of an institution.

Toronto birthing hospitals have clearly made advances in their compliance with BFI best practices. TPH will continue to offer support to Toronto birthing hospitals on their BFI journeys with the goal of implementing best breastfeeding practices and improving the health of the population we serve.

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**SIGNATURE**

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