



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 17, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Achievement of Baby Friendly Initiative Designation (BOH16045) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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Council Direction:

On October 24, 2011, the Board of Health approved and supported Public Health Services' (PHS) pursuit of Baby Friendly designation. Requirements for designation were outlined in BOH report BOH11035.

Background:

The Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) is an international program launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) which sets standards that organizations must implement to ensure their staff provides optimal breastfeeding services and support to mothers and infants. It is an international designation awarded to hospitals, public health units and community health centres. It ensures that best practices are in place that facilitate and support families in making informed decisions regarding infant feeding.

In 1991, the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) was established as a Health Canada Initiative. The BCC is the national authority for BFI designation. The BCC provides the standards and the assessment to ensure that the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and the Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes are adhered to.

In 2011, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) instituted Baby Friendly designation as a requirement for all health units in Ontario. As such, in 2012, BFI status

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was made a health promotion accountability agreement indicator that health units are required to report on.

Baby Friendly Initiative Designation:

The City of Hamilton PHS Department's 2016 BFI status accountability agreement indicator target is to achieve BFI designation. In order to achieve this target, representatives from the BCC were invited to PHS to complete a final assessment June 1 through June 3, 2016. Assessment included: a comprehensive document review, visits to PHS office sites, as well as community groups to interview both staff and clients, and telephone interviews with clients. In addition, recent breastfeeding rates for the City of Hamilton were examined. BFI designation requires a minimum 75% total breastfeeding rate at "entry to service" (at time of hospital discharge). Based on 2015 data obtained from BORN (Better Outcomes Registry and Network) Ontario, Hamilton has an 88% total breastfeeding rate.

PHS is proud to report achievement of our 2016 target of BFI designation. The final assessment report prepared by the BCC was remarkably positive. The assessors were impressed with the variety of services that allow for timely breastfeeding support and that accommodate families with barriers to accessing services. PHS staff members were commended for their commitment to the BFI and their deep understanding of the value of the BFI as a catalyst for change at a professional and organizational level. PHS' dedication to ongoing collaboration with community partners to ensure consistent breastfeeding messaging, and a seamless transition for breastfeeding families from hospital to the community was also recognized.

The external assessment process provided an amazing example of collective ownership amongst PHS staff. Although the breastfeeding team within the Family Health Division was involved in the direct work of attaining designation, all PHS staff were engaged in the process and demonstrated a clear understanding of their role in supporting and promoting breastfeeding in the City of Hamilton. The extent of mutual support between all programs and services within PHS exemplifies how all staff within a Department can contribute to important initiatives, like BFI, for our community. Both staff and our external BCC assessors recognized the significance of collaborative efforts in the achievement of BFI designation.

Next Steps:

Baby Friendly Designation is awarded for a five year term. Over the next five years, PHS will be responsible for the ongoing assessment and provision of BFI designation criteria and is required to report how BFI principles are being upheld on an annual basis to the BCC. This will require continued staff education, policy maintenance and collaboration with community partners. Assessors will complete another site visit at the time of re-designation.

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In addition, as part of maintaining BFI designation, PHS is required to collect data regarding breastfeeding initiation, exclusivity and duration. Ongoing data must be collected and submitted to the BCC on an annual basis. The requirements include:

- The calculation of breastfeeding rates,
- Demonstrated increases in breastfeeding rates over time, and
- Annual and 5 year summary reports.

In order to meet the above requirements, PHS is in the process of implementing a breastfeeding surveillance system that will allow for ongoing monitoring and reporting of local breastfeeding rates for 2 months, 4 months, and 6 months postpartum. Relevant data will be gathered through population health data sets and a six month postpartum follow up survey. PHS will continually evaluate this surveillance system to ensure it meets the requirements of BCC and our internal program planning needs.

The implementation of BFI serves the objective of protecting, supporting and promoting breastfeeding which, as a result, has multiple benefits for families, mothers, children, caregivers and the City of Hamilton. BFI serves to create an environment that normalizes breastfeeding in public and in the workplace and that enhances community support. BFI is a powerful example of effective public health promotion and contributes directly to the City vision of making Hamilton the best place to raise a child and age successfully.