



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 16, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Public Health Services' Breastfeeding Services Update (BOH17040) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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Council Direction:

Not Applicable.

Information:

Public Health Services (PHS) piloted a breastfeeding services home visiting model in order to determine how best to serve breastfeeding families in the City of Hamilton. This report aims to highlight the findings of this pilot and planned next steps.

Background

For the last 9 years, PHS' Breastfeeding Program has offered 16 clinic appointments and 4 home visits per week to clients seeking breastfeeding support. PHS breastfeeding clinics have been offered at the David Braley Health Sciences Centre and 891 Upper James Street. In 2016, a breastfeeding program review revealed that 21% of booked clinic appointments resulted in "no shows" and cancellations. Conversely, only 5% of booked home visit appointments resulted in "no shows" and cancellations.

In order to determine how best to serve breastfeeding families in the City of Hamilton PHS piloted a breastfeeding services home visiting model between June 5th and August 5th, 2017. Details of the pilot plan were communicated to the Board of Health via an Information Update in May of 2017. During the pilot, breastfeeding clinic location appointments were put on hold to allow for the trial of the home visiting-only model.

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A total of 20 home visit appointments were offered weekly, Monday through Friday. Offering 20 appointments ensured families had access to the same number of service opportunities as the previous blended model. Families' access breastfeeding services via the Health Connections telephone line. This referral pathway remained unchanged during the pilot. A communication plan was developed and implemented to ensure internal staff and key community stakeholders were informed of the pilot plan. Both groups supported the pilot plan.

Pilot Results

Pilot data was collected and analysed regarding appointment bookings, completion rates and visit outcomes. Paper or email surveys were offered to clients upon completion of home visits, for the purpose of measuring client satisfaction. Table 1 highlights the service utilization rates for both the blended model and the home visiting-only model, as a comparison.

Table 1

Service	Available Appointments	% Booked	% Booked Visits Completed	Service Utilization Rate
Combined Model – Clinic & Home Visits Feb 2016 – July 2016	516	73%	75%	54%
Home Visit Pilot June 5, 2017–August 5, 2017	176	94%	90%	85%

Data analysis revealed the following results:

- A 21% increase in the number of home visits scheduled;
- A low cancellation rate for the home visits - 7%;
- 90% of scheduled home visits resulted in completion – a 15% increase from the blended model;
- Greater utilization of staff time – a 31% increase in overall service utilization;
- 98% of families serviced during the pilot indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the service received;
- Positive feedback received from internal staff and community partners regarding ease of service access for clients.

Clients surveyed identified common barriers to accessing service outside of the home. These barriers included physical discomfort, lack of childcare, lack of transportation, and transportation/parking costs associated with attending a clinic. The home visit option reduced or eliminated these barriers to service access. Clients rated home visits

as their first choice for how they would like to receive breastfeeding support. Conversely, clinic appointments were rated the least preferred method.

The home visiting only model is a cost neutral activity. No additional FTE is required to provide only home visiting services. Additional costs accrued for staff travel will be offset by the costs that will no longer be required for maintaining two clinic spaces.

New Model

Based on the results and success of the breastfeeding home visiting pilot, the Breastfeeding Program plans to continue offering breastfeeding services through a home visiting model and discontinue the blended clinic model. In addition to this model being the preferred models for the families we service, the pilot results indicate it is a more efficient use of staff resource. Furthermore, breastfeeding clinic services remain an option for families in Hamilton. Both, St. Joseph's Healthcare (Charlton Campus), and Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation (McMaster Site), offer breastfeeding clinic services. This plan will be shared internally and with community stakeholders. The Breastfeeding Program will continue to monitor home visiting model outcomes as well as continue to collaborate and coordinate breastfeeding services with community partners to ensure ongoing continuous quality improvement (CQI).

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