

Overview of Healthy People 2030 Objective Proposal and Public Comment Opportunity

Summary

The proposed Healthy People 2030 objectives include one breastfeeding objective on exclusive breastfeeding at six months. This is a steep reduction from Healthy People 2020, which included eight breastfeeding objectives (including four sub-objectives). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is soliciting written comments through January 17, 2019, which provides a critical and time-sensitive opportunity for the First Food field. Early in 2019, sample comments will be provided to support individuals and organizations responding to the public comment opportunity.

Background

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has released the [proposed objectives for Healthy People 2030 \(HP2030\)](#). Healthy People focuses on critical health promotion and disease prevention topics. Since its launch in 1979, the initiative has grown substantially—increasing from 226 objectives in 15 topic areas for Healthy People 1990 to more than 1,200 objectives in 42 topic areas for Healthy People 2020. Because stakeholders have indicated a desire for a more specific and targeted initiative in the next decade, Healthy People 2030 will be a streamlined set of national health objectives guiding the Nation in efforts to improve health. While this translates to a smaller set of objectives, Healthy People 2030 will continue to represent critical public health priorities by addressing the leading causes of morbidity and mortality and driving action at the national, state, and local levels.

The [Secretary's Advisory Committee on National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives for 2030](#) is a federal advisory committee composed of non-federal, independent subject matter experts. The Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the development and implementation of the national health promotion and disease prevention objectives for 2030. [Meeting materials](#) published from the Secretary's Advisory Committee document the process taken to reduce the number of objectives.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is soliciting written comments regarding the Healthy People 2030 objectives. The public comment period will be open through **January 17, 2019.** The First Food field has been a strong voice through the decades supporting the inclusion of breastfeeding in the Healthy People initiative.

How Healthy People Impacts Breastfeeding

Over the past several decades, organizations, individuals, policymakers, federal and state agencies, and individuals across the Nation have looked to the Healthy People breastfeeding objectives as a call to action. Healthy People 2020 (launched in 2010) included eight breastfeeding objectives (including four sub-objectives) reflecting breastfeeding behaviors as well as policy, systems, and environmental factors that impact breastfeeding families. These included objectives on breastfeeding rates as well as objectives on maternity care practices, formula supplementation, and workplace support. Since then, federal and state funding for breastfeeding support has tended to focus on these areas.

To ensure continued momentum and progress toward creating a landscape of breastfeeding support across the United States, it is critical that Healthy People 2030 maintains a focus on breastfeeding. Infant feeding is an area with large gaps between evidence and practice, but Healthy People can help close this gap by driving continued funding and attention to this important issue.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the First Food field, breastfeeding rates and breastfeeding support have significantly increased. But, our work isn't finished yet. Fewer than 25% of infants are exclusively breastfed at 6 months of age. The crosscutting, cumulative impact of breastfeeding means that supporting breastfeeding success can create a tidal wave of progress toward our Nation's health goals.

Importantly, the Healthy People 2030 launch will take place close to the launch of the [2020-25 edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (DGA), which for the first time, will include guidance for infants and toddlers (from birth to age 24 months), and women who are pregnant. The DGA forms the basis for many federal, state, and local nutrition policies.

Healthy People Breastfeeding Objectives Through the Decades

[Healthy People 2000](#) included one breastfeeding objective and four sub-objectives in the Nutrition section:

- 2.11: Increase to at least 75 percent the proportion of mothers who breastfeed their babies in the early postpartum period and to at least 50 percent the proportion who continue breastfeeding until their babies are 5 to 6 months old.
- 2.11a: Increase to at least 75 percent the proportion of low-income mothers who breastfeed their babies in the early postpartum period and to at least 50 percent the proportion who continue breastfeeding until their babies are 5 to 6 months old.
- 2.11b: Increase to at least 75 percent the proportion of black mothers who breastfeed their babies in the early postpartum period and to at least 50 percent the proportion who continue breastfeeding until their babies are 5 to 6 months old.
- 2.11c: Increase to at least 75 percent the proportion of Hispanic mothers who breastfeed their babies in the early postpartum period and to at least 50 percent the proportion who continue breastfeeding until their babies are 5 to 6 months old.
- 2.11d: Increase to at least 75 percent the proportion of American Indian and Alaska Native mothers who breastfeed their babies in the early postpartum period and to at least 50 percent the proportion who continue breastfeeding until their babies are 5 to 6 months old.

[Healthy People 2010](#) included five breastfeeding objectives in the Maternal, Infant, and Child Health section:

- 16-19a Breastfeeding—Ever

- 16-19b Breastfeeding—At 6 months
- 16-19c Breastfeeding—At 1 year
- 16-19d Exclusive breastfeeding—Through 3 months
- 16-19e Exclusive breastfeeding—Through 6 months

[Healthy People 2020](#) includes four breastfeeding objectives and four-sub-objectives in the Maternal, Infant, and Child Health section:

- **MICH-21** Increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed
 - **MICH-21.1** Increase the proportion of infants who are ever breastfed
 - **MICH-21.2** Increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed at 6 months
 - **MICH-21.3** Increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed at 1 year
 - **MICH-21.4** Increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through 3 months
 - **MICH-21.5** Increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through 6 months
- **MICH-22** Increase the proportion of employers that have worksite lactation support programs
- **MICH-23** Reduce the proportion of breastfed newborns who receive formula supplementation within the first 2 days of life
- **MICH-24** Increase the proportion of live births that occur in facilities that provide recommended care for lactating mothers and their babies

Proposed HP2030 Breastfeeding Objectives

There is only one breastfeeding objective in the Healthy People 2030 proposal.

- MICH-2030-15 Increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through 6 months

Although it is disappointing to lose seven objectives, the six-month exclusive breastfeeding rate objective remains a top priority. This objective aligns with the recommendations of all major medical authorities. A strong response to the public comment opportunity in support of breastfeeding can help ensure that this objective is maintained in the final version, while also calling for additional breastfeeding objectives to be reinstated.