

HELP FAMILIES GET OFF TO A STRONG START

Support CDC Funding for Breastfeeding Support Programs

The Problem:

Although 83.2% of infants start out breastfeeding, only 24.9% of infants are exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months. Low rates of breastfeeding add more than \$3 billion a year in maternal and pediatric medical costs in the United States. Policies, systems, and environmental factors that surround families have a significant impact on the breastfeeding experience.

Prenatal and postpartum care influence whether and how long babies are breastfed. Families of color and low-income families experience additional structural barriers, including limited access to birthing facilities that implement evidence-based breastfeeding practices and access to lactation support. Routine hospital practices can disrupt early feeding and undermine breastfeeding. Despite the importance of breastfeeding for population health, many health care providers receive limited training in lactation management. In addition, a lack of support in community and employment settings can stand in the way of continued breastfeeding.

The Solutions:

Appropriations for breastfeeding help build and strengthen critical programs and initiatives helping to ensure that parents who want to breastfeed get the support they need before birth, while in the hospital, and once they return home. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding is provided through the Fiscal Year 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill (H.R. 2740).

Current Status and Opportunities for Action:

The CDC Division of Nutrition Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO) helps hospitals improve maternity care practices that support breastfeeding and promotes breastfeeding support for mothers, parents, and babies in worksites, child care settings, and communities.

- **Support \$58.92 M for the CDC Division of Nutrition Physical Activity and Obesity**
 - DNPAO measures progress by conducting the national Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) and National Immunization surveys. Data on breastfeeding practices and support nationally as well in all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the US Virgin Islands are compiled in the biannual Breastfeeding Report Card.
- **Support \$10M for the CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program**
 - This program improves maternity care practices with an emphasis on provider education and community linkages for continuity of support across systems. The House bill includes \$10M for Hospital Breastfeeding Support, while the Senate committee bill includes only \$8M for this vital program.
- **Support \$71.95M for the CDC Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program**
 - The REACH program works to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities through local, culturally appropriate programs, including breastfeeding support programs. The House bill includes \$71.95M for REACH while the Senate committee bill eliminates this critical program.

Demonstrated Effectiveness & Support:

Starting in Fiscal Year 2012 and continuing every year since, funding has been allocated to the **CDC for breastfeeding support programs** (FY14-FY19 = \$8M/year). **From 2012 to 2015, there has been a 4% increase in breastfeeding initiation rates and 13.7% increase in exclusive breastfeeding rates at 6 months.** In 2007 only 2% of babies were born in hospitals that had optimal policies and practices that support mothers who want to breastfeed. Today, over 1 million babies—more than 26% of all births in 2018—occur in Baby-Friendly designated hospitals.

Please maintain and expand federal funding for breastfeeding support programs in Labor-HHS Appropriations bills.

U.S. Breastfeeding Committee • www.USBreastfeeding.org