Advancing Inclusive and Equitable Breastfeeding Support at the Grassroots
The DC Breastfeeding Coalition

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Objectives

1. Describe one way the DCBFC is improving access to breastfeeding support in communities of greatest need.
2. List one way the DCBFC is improving diversity in the lactation field.
3. Identify how the DCBFC’s is optimizing collaboration and accountability for system level change.
Disclosures

Vanessa Hanible and Jennifer Tender have nothing to disclose

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DC Demographics

• DC population approx. 700,000
• City divided into wards
  ◦ Southeastern wards largest health and economic disparities
  ◦ Wards 5,7,8 more than 90% of the residents are African American
## Breastfeeding Rates:
**Healthy People 2020, U.S., Washington, DC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration</th>
<th>2020 Target (%)</th>
<th>U.S. (%) 2015 births</th>
<th>DC (%) 2015 Births</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 6 months</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 1 year</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively through 3 months</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively through 6 months</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Immunization Survey, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services
[https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard.htm)

## Racial Disparities for Breastfeeding Rates:
**Washington, DC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration</th>
<th>Caucasian (%)</th>
<th>African American (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive 6 months</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DC Breastfeeding Coalition

The DC Breastfeeding Coalition was established to reduce breastfeeding disparities among the most vulnerable families in our community.

DCBFC history

DC Breastfeeding Task Force organized in 2003
- OWH Community Demonstration Project

DC Breastfeeding Coalition established in 2004
- 30-45 members
- Multi-disciplinary
Improving Access to Care

East of the River Lactation Support Center

Collaboration Between:
• Children's National Health System
• The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program
• The DC Breastfeeding Coalition

East of the River Lactation Support Center

• Integrated into a pediatric primary care center in SE DC; Open to anyone in the community
• Lactation Peer Educators primary lactation support providers with IBCLC supervision
• Breastfeeding Medicine physician for consults
• Prenatal Breastfeeding Education: 2-week class
• Post-partum breastfeeding consults
• Moms Got Milk Club (families welcome!)
• Pacify App
• Referrals
  • Social Work
  • Children’s Law Center
• 844 unique prenatal and postpartum families during FY17
  • 90% of the families receive Medicaid
Breastfeeding Peer Educators

- Lactation Consults
  - East of the River Lactation Support Center
  - Howard University Hospital post partum

- Prenatal Education
  - East of the River Lactation Support Center
  - DC Public Schools Breastfeeding Education for teen parents
  - Howard University Hospital obstetric clinic

- Continuity of care: Schedule WIC appointments
DC Resource Guide

- First distributed in 2004
- Biennial
- Trilingual (Spanish/English/Amharic)
- APP launched in 1/2019 (>2200 installs)
- ASTHO grant

Improving Diversity

- Lactation Certification Prep Course
  - DC has 1.98 IBCLCs/1,000 live births
  - Increase underrepresented IBCLCs
  - Low-cost
  - Five courses (45-hours each)
  - 55 participants

- DCBFC Lactation Certification Scholarship
Optimizing collaboration and accountability for system level changes: Legislation

Consulted on
- The Infant and Toddler Developmental Health Services Act of 2017 (Birth to Three for All DC Act of 2018)
- The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative Act of 2018

Testimony
- Universal Paid Leave Act of 2015—(passed for 8 weeks)
- Defending Women’s Access to Health Care
- Infant and Toddler Development Health Services Act
- The Breastmilk Bank and Lactation Support Act of 2014

Lactation Commission
- Component of un-funded Breast Milk Bank and Lactation Support Act
- DCBFC encouraged the formation
- Collaboration with DC Health
- Government Organizations:
  - Office State Superintendent of Education, Department of Health Care Finance, Department of Human Services
- Develop recommendations to promote and support breastfeeding in DC
Lactation Commission Recommendations

- Breastfeeding advocates included in Mayoral summits about perinatal health
- DC Health:
  - Provide funding for a needs assessment for a HMBANA Milk Bank
    - If deemed necessary, identify the best options for operation
  - Commissions fiscal impact reports for:
    - A needs assessment of the adequacy of lactation services in DC
    - A District-wide breastfeeding hotline
    - Initiates a program to support the systematic implementation of breastfeeding-friendly practices in FQHCs

Department of Health Care Finance

Medicaid Coverage to Promote Breastfeeding policy (2014)

- Coverage of IBCLCs
  - Created a rule to allow IBCLCs to become Medicaid providers
  - Advocating to expand to CLCs in future

- Breast pumps and lactation supplies
  - Reimbursement rate too low
  - Durable Medical Equipment (DME) company who negotiated with Medicaid Managed Care Organizations
  - Distributing breast pumps in outpatient clinics

- Outpatient coverage of donated human milk
Next Steps

- Ongoing funding
- Ongoing work with the Lactation Commission to:
  - Conduct a community needs assessment
  - Implement a breastfeeding curriculum for K-12
  - Create an online breastfeeding library
  - Improve community support

Advice for Other Organizations

- Identify communities with the greatest need for breastfeeding support
- Identify and partner with breastfeeding advocates in the local government and Department of Health
- Advocate for legislation that supports breastfeeding
- Provide support to birthing facilities
- Engage traditional and non-traditional partners
DC Breastfeeding Coalition