

FACT SHEET: Maternity Care Practice Improvement Programs



Systematic health care practice improvement enables patients to make and carry out their own informed decisions, highlighting medical professionals' role in providing patient-centered, evidence-based care. It has been well established that **maternity care practices in the first hours and days after birth make the difference** in whether and how long babies are breastfed. The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) is a hospital quality improvement and accreditation program that evaluates maternity care practices for their support of optimal infant nutrition and mother-baby bonding. The BFHI is based on Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding that have been shown to increase breastfeeding rates by providing support to mothers.

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding and the Institute of Medicine report, *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention*, call for the implementation of maternity care practices that are fully supportive of breastfeeding, and specifically for accelerating implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

Federal Legislation Overview

Section 4002 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) established the Prevention & Public Health Fund (PPHF) to provide expanded and sustained national investments in prevention and public health, to improve health outcomes, and to enhance health care quality. Starting in Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12) and continuing every year since, PPHF funding has been allocated to the **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) especially to fund initiatives to support hospitals in promoting breastfeeding** (FY14-FY16 = \$8M/year). EMPower Breastfeeding is the current funded quality improvement initiative, supporting 93 hospitals in 24 states to implement the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.

Demonstrated Effectiveness & Support

CDC collects data every two years on maternity care practices and policies related to infant feeding through a national survey known as the Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) Survey. The impact of the CDC's recent investment already has been substantial: the **percentage of U.S. hospitals implementing a majority of the Ten Steps has increased from about 29% in 2007 to 44% in 2011 to 62% in 2015**. Results of the 2015 mPINC survey showed that, on average, U.S. hospitals scored 79 out of a possible 100 points. Although still less than ideal, this is an increase from an overall national score of just 63 in 2007 and 70 in 2011, showing steady improvement.

By another measure, in 2011 just over 6% of live births occurred in a Baby-Friendly facility. Today this figure is almost 20% of annual births, representing **403 U.S. facilities that hold the Baby-Friendly designation currently**, with an additional **701 currently on the pathway to designation**. In addition, major medical associations and national organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and American Academy of Family Physicians, endorse the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding families and health care providers simply cannot afford to lose support for successful initiatives to improve hospitals' infant feeding policies and practices: please maintain funding for the CDC's breastfeeding support programs.

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

