

CDC'S DIVISION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH SUCCESS STORIES

by: Walter W. Niles, MPA

“Anytime, Anywhere” Breastfeeding Is Normal

SUMMARY

Babies are born to breastfeed, but breastfeeding is not widely accepted as normal. Public health awareness to create an atmosphere of support and acceptance that breastfeeding is normal was put into action through a countywide social marketing campaign with billboards, newspaper ads, and bus wraps. The campaign, which was launched during World Breastfeeding Week, captured the public's attention that breastfeeding is normal "Anytime, Anywhere."



CHALLENGE

Low breastfeeding rates negatively affect the health of mothers and infants. Breastfeeding is not only the best source of infant nutrition; it also protects both mother and child. According to Hillsborough County WIC in June 2010, 71.5% of mothers breastfed exclusively at birth; however, that number dropped to 11.5% at 2 months, 9.9% at 3 months, and 8% at 6 months, falling far short of the Healthy People 2020 target of 25.5% of mothers exclusively

breastfeeding through 6 months. Barriers such as lack of support among family and community need to be removed or women will continue to be discouraged from breastfeeding. A community barrier was noted when an ad agency chosen for our campaign initially was concerned that promoting breastfeeding was too controversial and risqué. After understanding the purpose of the campaign, the agency agreed to display the ads.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

You have the ability to improve the health and future of mothers and children simply by encouraging and supporting breastfeeding. Please support anyone you see who is breastfeeding, and encourage soon-to-be moms to breastfeed. Learn about the health benefits such as protection from infections and illnesses for babies and decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancers for moms. Share that information where you live, learn, work, and play. Breastfeeding is normal. Help make it the easier choice.

"The action steps...to normalize breastfeeding send a powerful signal...that breastfeeding matters... [the] community care[s] about the health outcomes of women, children, and families...[and] that breastfeeding can occur anywhere, anytime, and by anyone."

- Dr. Joan Younger Meek, Pres. FBC

SOLUTION

A countywide social marketing campaign was created to highlight the benefits of breastfeeding, the legal protection to breastfeed in public, and promote a supportive environment for breastfeeding women. The Office of Health Equity developed the campaign along with St. Joseph's Women's Hospital and the Hillsborough County Breastfeeding Taskforce, which includes local birthing hospitals, WIC-Nutrition, International Board of Certified Lactation Consultants, University of South Florida students, and other community members. The partnerships allowed the campaign to reach a wider audience.

RESULTS

Policy makers and residents support and encourage breastfeeding:

"...I breastfed my two babies....I treasure those precious memories, knowing that not only was breastfeeding my babies a great source of nutrition, not only did it save money, but also blessed me with many special memories."

-Senator Ronda Storms, 10th District, Florida Senate

"I support mothers who breastfeed because it is healthy for the baby..."

-Florida House Representative Betty Reed, District 59

"...about the awesome billboard...'I breastfeed Anytime, Anywhere.' I think that's awesome that there's a campaign like that to help with public awareness. I just wanted to say good job...I think it's wonderful. Thanks."

-Anonymous

Contact

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FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Building upon the success of the social marketing campaign that breastfeeding is normal "Anytime, Anywhere," the Office of Health Equity (OHE) sponsored a Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC®) Training Program in May 2012. OHE will assist newly trained CLCs in the creation of local breastfeeding support groups for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to connect, support, and encourage each other as well as to receive professional, evidence-based breastfeeding advice and counseling. OHE continues to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding to increase the percentage of all women, especially African American women, who start and continue to exclusively breastfeed for 6 months to improve the health of Hillsborough County mothers and children.