

Nova Scotia Breastfeeding and Baby-Friendly Initiative Update April 2018

As you are aware, the health system in Nova Scotia has been in transformation. Work has continued during this time led by many of you across the two health authorities; the IWK Health Centre and the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA). The following update describes some of the work that is happening at the provincial level.

Baby-Friendly Initiative Designation

A BFI Certificate of Participation was awarded in Nova Scotia for many years as a strategy to promote and acknowledge progress towards BFI designation in hospitals and Public Health. Submitting an application for a Certificate required developing or updating a local BFI workplan thus the process served us well over time and helped us move forward as a province. A BFI self-assessment is now an expectation of the NSHA and the IWK and, as a result Nova Scotia will no longer be using the Certificate of Participation.

A new BFI electronic self-assessment tool has been identified. For hospitals and Public Health offices that have existing self-assessments, there is no requirement to move to the new template at this time. For consistency, however, we will move to this template as a province over time.

A new process is being introduced this year. The BFI Status Report is a high level summary of the BFI self-assessment and will identify strengths, highlights and areas of improvement. This information will be shared with NSHA Maternal-Child, IWK and Public Health leadership to identify system level issues and opportunities.

Both documents are attached for your review and use.

Breastfeeding and Baby-Friendly Initiative Policies

A policy scan of existing former district health authority and IWK breastfeeding and BFI policies identified 67 policies and 3 draft policies. Further analysis identified outdated/redundant policies, policies to be updated and policy gaps.

New/revised policies include:

Skin-to-Skin Contact for Healthy Term Infants Policy – IWK Effective Date January 2018 and NSHA Effective Date May 22, 2018 Education to support this policy is available on LMS.

Infant Feeding Policy – in development

Expressed Breast Milk (EBM): Safe Handling, Storage, Administration and Disposal (NSHA) – in development (Note: This policy is consistent with IWK's policy.)

The former Provincial Breastfeeding Policy (in revision) is envisioned as an administrative, umbrella policy with the operational policies nested within.

Breastfeeding Education

A decision has been made by NSHA and IWK senior leaders to transition from the *Breastfeeding Making a Difference (MaD)* course to the Step 2 online breastfeeding education program. The *Making a Difference* instructors course was launched in 2009. At that time it was felt that an in-person course that explored values and attitudes as well as evidence-based breastfeeding education was required to create a breastfeeding culture in hospitals and Public Health across Nova Scotia. Through the excellent work that has taken place over the last nine years, much of this work building on the concepts included in the *MaD* course, the culture is shifting.

In 2018, the Baby-Friendly Initiative is viewed as a quality improvement initiative and has senior level support. There is an expectation to implement BFI, including breastfeeding education, in all hospitals and Public Health. In addition, there was a need to be responsive to the challenges that were identified with the *MaD* course which included insufficient 'critical mass' to offer the course in some areas, backfilling for staff to participate and lack of updated course material. As a result the IWK and NSHA (Maternal-Child and Public Health) will be implementing the Step 2 breastfeeding education program as mandatory education for all staff working directly with families.

Opportunities to share best practices across the province within the health system and with community partners will be used whenever possible e.g. Louise Dumas Skin-to-Skin presentation that is available to support the new NSHA/IWK *Skin-to-Skin Contact for Healthy Term Infants Policy*.

Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC)

Nova Scotia continues to participate on the BCC Provincial/Territorial Committee with Becky Attenborough and Sally Loring as the provincial representatives. The BCC P/T Committee provides a national forum for sharing and opportunities to collaborate on projects. In addition, Michelle LeDrew is currently the co-chair of the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada Board of Directors.

The BCC Baby-Friendly National Symposium was held in Moncton last fall and Nova Scotia was well represented. Links to symposium presentations, as well as information on the Baby-Friendly Initiative and WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes can be found at:

<http://breastfeedingcanada.ca>

A new Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative implementation guidance document has just been released by UNICEF and WHO – *Implementation Guidance: Protecting, promoting and supporting Breastfeeding in facilities providing maternity and newborn services-- the revised Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative*

<http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/infantfeeding/bfhi-implementation/en/>

The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada will be reviewing and updating documents as required, in the meantime, continue to reference the BCC document *The BFI 10 Steps and WHO Code Outcome Indicators for Hospitals and Community Health Services*. More to come on this.

Supporting breastfeeding and BFI

Leadership for breastfeeding and BFI is needed from all levels of the health system. To support and facilitate provincial level collaboration, address system level challenges and to monitor provincial BFI progress, a small existing committee representing NSHA Maternal- Child Health, IWK, Reproductive Care Program and Public Health will provide oversight for BFI in Nova Scotia. This committee replaces the former Provincial Breastfeeding Committee. Task teams will be identified to support various pieces of work and will draw from expertise across the IWK and the NSHA.

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