

Eateries in Clinton County, NY Welcome Breastfeeding

by: Mandy Snay

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Getting local restaurants on board is only one of the first steps in this exciting endeavor. Now we need your help.

- Patronize locally owned and operated eateries that participate in the Better Choice Eatery Program. An up-to-date list can be found on www.clintonhealth.org.
- Support and encourage Moms breastfeeding openly in the community.
- Have a favorite eatery that isn't participating? Tell them about the program and send them our way!

"Including a way for a restaurant to make its support of breastfeeding known to its patrons was a perfect way to elevate awareness for support of breastfeeding in our community. It was a well-timed opportunity to make this program improvement."

- Lisa Turner, Supervising Public Health Educator & BCE Staff



SUMMARY

Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the NYS Department of Health have identified increasing breastfeeding as a priority health area for improvement. To realize progress, support for breastfeeding needs to be strong in our communities. This success story details how Clinton County, NY coordinated health messaging by engaging businesses in promoting breastfeeding as an accepted practice and community value. Local food establishments possess unique opportunities to influence the overall health of our community. Integrating breastfeeding support criteria into a local restaurant certification program allowed local eateries to formally demonstrate their support and serve as an example for other businesses. With revised eligibility guidelines in place, work to get local eateries enrolled is underway.

CHALLENGE

The USDA estimates nearly half of all our calories are being consumed away from home. Many communities are finding ways to make it easier for residents to make better choices when eating out. This trend also makes local restaurants a prime location to promote healthy behaviors and community values. The Clinton County *Better Choice Eatery* (BCE) program recognizes establishments that offer and promote at least three menu options that align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Eateries also elect to make changes that demonstrate a commitment to making Clinton County a healthier place to live. The Clinton County WIC Program identified an opportunity to connect their messaging with BCE. Breastmilk is perhaps the most nutritionally balanced meal there is but supporting breastfeeding was not suggested as a healthy environment support by the BCE program. Creating Partnerships for Health Mothers and Children (CPHMC) set out to change that.

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

Contact

Mandy Snay

Clinton County Health Department

(CCHD)

Mandy.Snay@ClintonCountyGov.com

SOLUTION

BCE program guidelines were being revised over the Summer of 2016 and in preparation for a fall re-launch of the program. CCHD CPHMC and *BCE* program staff worked to integrate a healthy environment strategy related to breastfeeding in the application. Once settling on terminology, the revised program materials were reviewed. CPHMC staff felt the environmental strategies could be strengthened and made the additional suggestion of creating a point system that would communicate anticipated value to the community's health for each strategy. Options received a point value from 1 to 3; eateries are required to commit to establishing strategies that minimally total 5 points.

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

By identifying shared goals, partners were able to connect health messaging in a meaningful way and strengthen community support for breastfeeding through new channels. CPHMC staff will extend the invitation to demonstrate support to breastfeeding families as they work with additional partners, including local pharmacies and day care centers, in accomplishing other project objectives. *BCE* staff will assume primary responsibility of program promotion with local restaurants. Presently, corresponding programs to *BCE*, *Better Choice Retailer and Better Choice Workplaces*, are in the process of integrating breastfeeding support criteria to their program qualifications. Incorporating breastfeeding messages into the framework of established and familiar programs increases the likelihood they will be carried forward. It also engages new partners in community health planning and promotion, allowing these new partners to set an example for other community health stakeholders.

RESULTS

In a very short time, much has been accomplished. An updated marketing packet and webpage have been approved by CCHD. *BCE* staff reviewed food safety inspections and developed a list of locations that met requirements to be included in the relaunch; CPHMC staff offered suggestions of eateries that would best reach young families in the community. This collaborative process resulted in a target list of twenty five local eateries. Marketing packets were mailed to each in August. The Clinton County WIC Program and CPHMC staff will also be promoting the *BCE* program to WIC families through newsletter updates and other events. CPHMC's goal is to recruit a minimum of five new eateries that opt to publically support breastfeeding in their establishments by May of 2017. This will double the number of participating eateries in the program and has an estimated potential reach of over 21,000 residents.