Breastfeeding Summit Provides Training for Over 160 Professionals

Summary

The 2016 Breastfeeding Summit, organized by Geary County Health Department and Delivering Change, featured two international breastfeeding speakers, Dr. Jack Newman and Dr. Nils Bergman. The speakers taught the most current breastfeeding practices and theories to over 160 professionals who work with mothers and babies, including physicians, lactation consultants, nurses, and dietitians. Participants left the summit armed with practical applications to support breastfeeding moms and babies as well as goals to achieve in the long term.

Challenge

84% number of women in Geary County initiate breastfeeding (KDHE Vital Statistics, 2014). While this may sound acceptable, looking at the opposite side of the spectrum means that 16 number of women do not breastfeed their babies. Rather than identify and reach women on an individual level, it is essential to create an overall more supportive environment for breastfeeding mothers in our community. A supportive breastfeeding environment would necessitate that all who encounter women and babies during pregnancy, delivery, postpartum, and throughout a child's first year of life are adequately trained with current breastfeeding practices. Breastfeeding can be complicated and intimidating to initiate and can be a lonely path to navigate for some moms. Trained professionals have the ability to turn a lonely breastfeeding path into a supportive, comfortable journey for both mom and baby.

Solution

Geary County Health Department's WIC and Delivering Change hosted the 2016 Breastfeeding Summit to increase the training of professionals who encounter women and babies during pregnancy, delivery, postpartum, and throughout a child's first year of life. The summit featured two international speakers, Dr. Jack Newman of Toronto, Canada and Dr. Nils Bergman of Cape Town, South Africa. The speakers are world-renowned breastfeeding advocates and researchers who were selected for their expertise and ability to inspire.

Success Stories

http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/
Results
Over 160 physicians, lactation consultants, nurses, dietitians, and other professionals were trained on current breastfeeding practices. On the first day, Dr. Jack Newman emphasized practical advice for attendees, such as "watch the baby to make sure he is actually swallowing milk"—a concept that is surprisingly too often forgotten. The second day delved further into the feeding and sleeping pattern of newborns with Dr. Nils Bergman; he highlighted the importance of "zero separation", also known as skin-to-skin contact, during the first 1000 minutes of a newborn’s life to best support breastfeeding. Participants left the summit inspired and armed with new breastfeeding information that, according to post-summit surveys, they planned to implement into their workplace.

Sustainable Success
Dr. Bergman encouraged participants to not be disheartened by slow change, as even starting the conversation within one’s workplace is a major step towards creating a better breastfeeding environment. A large part of sustainment will fall into the hands of the participants as they all must take the new information and put it into practice. Geary County Health Department and Delivering Change will continue to pursue opportunities to provide training for professionals in the area. They will continue to collaborate with their partners, including Kansas WIC, the Geary County Breastfeeding Coalition, the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, La Leche League International, and others to build a more supportive breastfeeding environment.

Your Involvement is Key
You can help support breastfeeding moms and babies and create a better breastfeeding environment in our community. Check out the “Geary County Breastfeeding Coalition” Facebook page for more information about breastfeeding initiatives in our area, as well as upcoming meetings.