

Wood County, Wisconsin, Increasing Access to Remove Barriers to Breastfeeding

by: Amber France & Sarah Salewski

SUMMARY

The Wood County Health Department, Wood County Chronic Disease Prevention Coalition, and Aspirus Doctors Clinic are working together to develop breastfeeding policies and establish a referral system to lactation services. The breastfeeding policies aim to remove barriers to breastfeeding – such as lack of provider education and an inadequate referral system for lactation services. The goal is to increase the number of moms exclusively breastfeeding until 6 months with continued breastfeeding until the child is at least one year of age.



CHALLENGE

Breastfeeding provides long lasting health benefits for children and mothers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in Wisconsin 80% of moms initiate breastfeeding and by the time the child is 6 months of age 59% are still breastfeeding at all, and only 27% of babies are exclusively breastfed at 6 months. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for about the first 6 months of life, and continued breastfeeding until the child is one year of age, or for as long as is mutually desired by the mother and baby. The lack of breastfeeding policies and a comprehensive referral system between providers and lactation services in Wood County, may be contributing to barriers to the exclusivity and longevity of breastfeeding.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Breastfeeding moms have a right to adequate support and services. Voice your needs for breastfeeding support and services in your community. For more information on lactation resources in Wood County, visit www.woodcountybreastfeeding.org

"Bridging the gap between services within the first few days of life will be huge to the success to increasing the duration of breastfeeding. The Wood County WIC program sees a 30% drop in exclusive breastfeeding in the first month. There is definitely a need for collaboration."

- Amber France, Nutrition & Lactation Program Supervisor

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SOLUTION

The Wood County Health Department and Wood County Chronic Disease Prevention Coalition are collaborating with the Aspirus Doctors Clinic to develop a referral system to lactation services in Wood County and a breastfeeding policy that encompasses a referral process. The providers at Aspirus Doctors Clinic will be educated on available lactation services, when to make a referral, and how the referral process will work. A breastfeeding policy will be created to ensure adequate breastfeeding support is being provided to breastfeeding moms.

RESULTS

A breastfeeding policy is currently being developed by the Aspirus Doctors Clinic. A referral process has been discussed. At an infant's 3-5 day doctor's appointment, pediatricians have agreed to refer breastfeeding moms to lactation services provided by the Wood County Health Department for continuity of care. The pediatricians will provide the patient with a lactation services referral, as well as contact information for lactation services. Referrals to the Wood County Health Department will allow public health lactation consultants to initiate contact with breastfeeding mothers earlier and help prevent barriers to breastfeeding.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

The implementation of this referral process can be sustained by developing a breastfeeding policy to ensure compliance. The goal is to develop a policy and procedure with the Aspirus Doctors Clinic and expand to all healthcare clinics in Wood County. Additional resources and data will need to be collected to determine success of the program.