

“Breastfeeding the First 6 Weeks: Support & Lactation Accommodation Outreach for Local Employers”

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Category: Breastfeeding

The Jefferson County WIC offices received supplemental funding for breastfeeding projects this last year. One of our projects was to initiate a postpartum breastfeeding group for all mothers called “Breastfeeding Success: The First 6 Weeks.” The goal was to offer early postpartum breastfeeding education and support in a group setting. This was intended to address early concerns to allow for longer duration of breastfeeding. By encouraging mothers early, they will want to breast feed longer and meet their goals. We addressed topics that directly related to the birth through the first six weeks’ period that commonly challenge breastfeeding success (hunger cues, growth spurts, proper latch, etc.).

Our second project was outreach to local employers and childcare providers and increase lactation support for breastfeeding women returning to work. We worked with in Jefferson County services to get examples of how to accommodate breastfeeding women in a variety of settings and to provide examples of policies. We then conducted a survey among WIC clients on the support they received or are currently receiving from their workplace. The intent was to reach out to small businesses that may not be aware of the laws or the benefits to accommodating a nursing employee and to increase the number of breastfeeding-friendly employers in Jefferson County.

Project 1: Breastfeeding the First Six Weeks Group Lactation Consults

Project Coordinator:

This project was outlined and directed by Cindy Kisselman, RN, IBCLC. Support Staff were Kelsey Rivera, RD and Heather Cordova, IBCLC.

Community Need:

As shown in several reports (2013 CDC Guide to Strategies to Support Breastfeeding Mothers and Babies; the 2011 Surgeon General's Call To Action to Support Breastfeeding; Cost Analysis of Maternal Disease Associated with Suboptimal Breastfeeding published in the Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology in 2013, etc.), the need and ability to access early breastfeeding intervention is noted to directly impact duration and allowing for mothers to achieve their personal breastfeeding goals. There are currently little to no lactation resources for mothers outside the hospital setting in Jefferson County, especially for low income mothers and their babies.

Project Goals:

The primary goal of this project was to offer early postpartum education and support in a group setting to address early concerns and allow for longer duration of breastfeeding. By encouraging mothers, we hope they will want to breastfeed longer and meet their own breastfeeding goals. The group addresses topics that directly relate to the postpartum period of birth to six weeks and commonly challenge breastfeeding success.

Target Audience and Community Partners:

The group was offered to all WIC breastfeeding mothers. Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) and Prenatal Plus Nurses in Jefferson County were informed of the group and encouraged to have their clients attend. A presentation was given to Denver NFP nurses as well. The group was offered to general public at a cost of \$3 per visit if they did not qualify for the WIC Program.

Cindy also went to one of the MCPN Clinics in Jefferson County and explained the group and asked the care providers to encourage their clients to attend.

Project Activities:

A contest was started to remind and encourage the WIC Educators and staff to tell all new breastfeeding moms to attend the group. Clients were given a "Golden Ticket to Breastfeeding Success" by the educator who referred them to the group with both of their names on it. A "Golden Ticket" was drawn at the end of April at a WIC staff meeting and the winning staff member was issued a donated Starbucks gift card. Posters and fliers about the groups were provided to WIC clients in our monthly prenatal breastfeeding classes.

Group consults were offered weekly at each of the three WIC sites beginning in April 2014 to increase opportunity for hands on breastfeeding support.

Project Evaluation and Results:

48 clients attended the group from April to August 2014. A telephone survey was completed by an administrative staff at the end of August. Everyone who attended a group was called and of those 48 attendees, 30 were reached for the survey, or 63%. Of those surveyed, the class was rated on a scale of 1-10 for being beneficial and the results showed an average rating of 9.9, meaning they felt the class was extremely helpful. 90% stated they believe they indeed breastfed longer because of attending.

Future of Project and Sustainability:

We will continue to run these lactation support groups weekly in each WIC clinic location while there is an IBCLC on staff to lead them. Jefferson County Public Health is in the process of developing a *Community Health Improvement Plan* and increasing community partnerships. We hope to partner more closely with hospitals that deliver babies to Jefferson County residents and our OB/GYN and Pediatric Clinics that work with the Medicaid population to increase referrals to the group. We will continue to charge a minimal \$3 fee for those moms who attend and do not qualify for the WIC Program.

Project 2: Business Case for Breastfeeding with Employers and Childcare Providers

Project Coordinator:

This project was outlined and coordinated by Kelsey Rivera, RD. Support staff included Cindy Kisselman, RN, IBCLC and several WIC Educator Staff in completing outreach to local healthcare providers.

Community Need:

As reported by the 2013 CDC Guide to Strategies to Support Breastfeeding Mothers and Babies, mothers are one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. labor force. In 2012, 57% of all mothers with infants were employed. Working full-time outside the home is related to a shorter duration of breastfeeding. Low-income women are more likely than women with higher incomes to return to work earlier and to have jobs that make it challenging for them to continue breastfeeding. Rates of breastfeeding initiation and duration are higher among women who have longer maternity leave, work part-time rather than full-time, or have breastfeeding support programs in the workplace. Several studies have indicated that support for lactation at work benefits not only families but employers as well by improving productivity, enhancing the employer's public image, and decreasing absenteeism, health care costs, and employee turnover.

Project Goals, Target Audience and Community Partners:

The goals of this project were to first complete an internal audit of Jefferson County services, policies, and departmental awareness of the "Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act." Once this self assessment was completed and any issues addressed and corrected, the goal was to reach out to WIC participants to gather information about local businesses in Jefferson County that may be interested or in need of information regarding benefits of accommodating nursing employees.

We also reached out to local healthcare providers in Jefferson County (MCPN Clinics, OB/GYN clinics, Pediatric Clinics, Lutheran Hospital, etc.) to ensure they accommodate breastfeeding employees and let them know of the WIC Program as a resource for their nursing mothers who are returning to work and in need of support. Towards the end of the project, we began working with our Environmental Health Department and Public Health Communications Team to reach out to internal employees and businesses during their inspections.

Project Activities:

Activities included contacting Jefferson County Human Resources to obtain information about policies and a list of divisions/departments in Jefferson County to contact. Any departments who were unaware or had misconceptions were educated and helped to be in compliance with the county policies and the state and federal laws.

A survey was created for use with currently pregnant or breastfeeding WIC participants in soliciting feedback on their employers in regards to breastfeeding accommodation. WIC Educators were asked to have clients complete the survey, in office, during the months of July and August 2014. Businesses were contacted via phone to offer education about the laws and benefits to them as well as ongoing support with accommodation.

An internal press release was created by Kelsey and the Health Communications Team to showcase current county designated breastfeeding/pumping rooms, provide information about the laws, and information on who to contact with any questions.

Kelsey attended quarterly Workplace Outreach phone conferences facilitated by CDPHE for networking and idea sharing amongst other local health departments and counties working with employers.

Project Evaluation and Future:

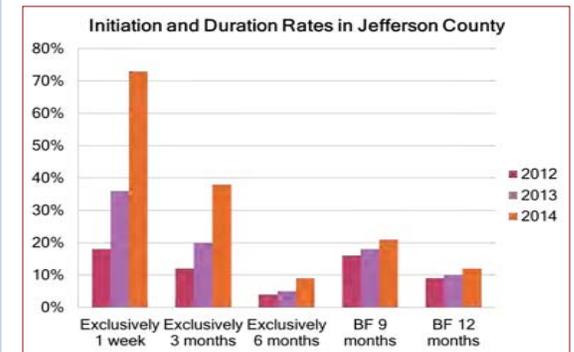
Starting with an internal assessment was a benefit in refining techniques and building confidence in talking to employers about accommodating employees. Of 39 departments contacted, all were willing to talk about the laws and benefits to them as an employer.

The survey created for WIC participants was inefficient, of 200 printed surveys, only 12 were returned to the project coordinator and of those returned, only 2 were fully completed and usable. Those 2 businesses were contacted but not interested in information or did not return the phone call.

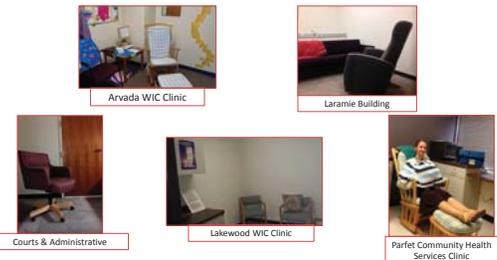
Future goals include applying for MCH Grant funding to continue outreach and education to local businesses and childcare providers. We also hope to create a referral system for environmental health inspectors to ask questions and refer employers and childcare providers in need of assistance with accommodation of employees.

Outcomes of the Projects

Increase in Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration Rates



Designated Lactation / Quiet Rooms in Jefferson County



Contact Information

For more information about Project 1: *Breastfeeding the First Six Weeks Group Lactation Consult* – please contact Cindy Kisselman via email: ckisselm@jeffco.us

For more information about Project 2: *Business Case for Breastfeeding with Employers and Childcare Providers* – please contact Kelsey Rivera via email: krivera@jeffco.us (sample lactation policies available upon request)