

“Partnering with Community Businesses to Provide Breastfeeding Support Groups”

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Breastfeeding support groups have proven to be a successful model to provide needed education and support to mothers. The goal of this project was to organize and implement breastfeeding support groups with the aid of community partners to build in sustainability and create collaborative relationships.

Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) collaborated with Naturally Loved Baby to initiate a North area support group and with Birth Rocks to start a South area support group. The target population was both WIC and non-WIC participants living in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties where few support group options are available.

10 staff completed a facilitator training and support groups began in July. Participants will complete a satisfaction survey.

Community Need

Breastfeeding education and support strategies are needed to meet the needs of women living in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas counties. Due to the recent decrease in funding for the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program, peer counselors are unable to provide support to mothers long term. Methods for longer term follow up are needed to help assure women are able to meet their breastfeeding goals. Community-based support groups are a proven successful model that can expand the support that women ideally have received in the hospital and help extend the duration of breastfeeding. Extending the duration of breastfeeding in the Tri-County Health Department region will help improve the health of infants and mothers in the community. Few support group options exist for these mothers which creates a gap in current services.

Goals

Goal

To organize and implement a minimum of one north area and one south area breastfeeding support group with the aid of community partners.

Desired Outcome

The WIC program to be viewed as a resource for breastfeeding information and support for the entire TCHD community, not just WIC participants, and build a large network of support for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

Target Audience

The target audience was pregnant and breastfeeding women, both WIC participants and non-WIC participants, living in Adams, Arapahoe or Douglas counties.



Community Partners

Tri-County Health Department convened partners within the health department and the community to work together to improve community support for pregnant and breastfeeding women through the creation of **Motherhood Moments: Breastfeeding and Wellness Support** groups.

Staff from the Nutrition and Nursing divisions provided input in the planning process and time to lead education sessions at the support groups.

Staff from Birth Rocks in Castle Rock and Naturally Loved in the Highlands provided input in the planning process and space in their facilities to host the support groups.



Activities

- Researched successful support group models through a literature review and key informant interviews.
- Convened a planning committee with 13 attendees representing three Tri-County Health Department programs and two community agencies.
- Trained support group facilitators through an on-line training: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implementation/enhancing-support/peer-support-groups/main>
- Created support group content and evaluation.
- Created and distributed marketing materials.
- South area support groups began in July and north area support groups began in August.



Evaluation

The goal of this project was met with the implementation of one north and one south area breastfeeding support group. Four women have attended the groups so the goal is to increase participation. Since the groups are new, participation is expected to increase.

- Ten facilitators completed a facilitator training
- Two internal partnerships and two external were formed

Satisfaction Survey results showed that 100% of participants:

- were very satisfied or satisfied with their group experience
- had their questions answered and their needs met
- plan to attend again and would recommend the group to a friend

Participants reported attending to get support, meet new people and get breastfeeding information.

None of the group participants were on the WIC program and 75% requested information about the program.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Establish a planning committee to help to ensure staff buy-in and willingness to volunteer time to be a group speaker.
- Use ideas from women familiar with the community to find free space suitable for a group which is not affiliated with a group or business that might alienate a participant.
- Use a variety of methods to advertise the group such as flyers and social media. Find out the places in the community where pregnant mothers and those with newborns frequent.
- Share with mothers who have overcome their personal breastfeeding challenges and may not feel the need to continue attending that they are a valuable asset to the next mother who attends with a similar challenge to aid retention.
- History indicates it takes some time to establish a group so do not be discouraged by low initial attendance.

Future and Sustainability

Support group facilitation has been assimilated into the breastfeeding peer counselor job description and Tri-County Health Department staff across multiple divisions are available for facilitation.

Working on a weekly basis with community partners to improve the groups and expand attendance will maintain newly established collaborative relationships and keep WIC as a resource.

As a result of the internal partnership built with the Nursing Division, the Motherhood Moments groups were included in the 2014-2015 Nursing Division Maternal and Child Health grant and grant monies will be provided for group educational materials and supplies.