

# **“Northern Colorado Breastfeeding SWOT Analysis”**

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Between January 2014 and September 2014, Weld County performed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis evaluating the support given to breastfeeding mothers within Northern Colorado.

We have implemented this SWOT analysis via several focus groups that have included local mothers, lactation professionals, medical staff and employers.

The outcomes of this SWOT analysis will be used to make important changes in the community including but not limited to the start of a Northern Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition.

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## Introduction

Breastfeeding is essential to the health and well-being of mothers and children. Considered on the forefront of normalizing breastfeeding, Colorado has impressive breastfeeding rates.

According to data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 81% of mothers in Colorado initiate breastfeeding. However, 50.3% of mothers in Colorado are exclusively breastfeeding at 3 months and only 25.8% of mothers in Colorado are exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months.

Improvement is still needed and support for breastfeeding mothers is imperative. In an attempt to recognize practical steps toward this improvement in supporting breastfeeding, as well as growing the successful breastfeeding rates of Northern Colorado, Weld County WIC performed a Breastfeeding SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis evaluating the support for local breastfeeding dyads from January 2014 to September 2014.

## Aim

- Identify strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats with regard to breastfeeding support in Northern Colorado.
- Identify goals and projects that could help better support breastfeeding dyads in Northern Colorado.
- Create action plans based on community feedback that will help accomplish these goals.
- Strengthen current forms of breastfeeding support and justify the implementation of new forms of breastfeeding support.

## Method

- ❖ 3 focus groups and 7 phone interviews with a total of 26 participants from Northern Colorado were conducted between March and September of 2014.
- ❖ At each focus group, participants were asked a series of 8-10 questions in a round table discussion format relating to Northern Colorado's strengths and weakness regarding breastfeeding mothers and increasing successful breastfeeding rates.
- ❖ For those unable to attend a focus group, one on one phone interviews were conducted.
- ❖ Participants were recruited via referrals, personal invitation, email, social media and cold calls.

### Focus Group #1

- Breastfeeding Women
- Participants: WIC Breastfeeding Women
- 5 participants, 1 moderator, 2 assistants

### Focus Group #2

- Lactation Professionals
- Participants: RN's, RD's, PhD's, CLC's, IBCLC's
- 7 participants, 1 moderator

### Focus Group #3

- Medical Professionals
- Participants: MD's, PA-C's, CNM's, RN's, IBCLC's
- 7 participants, 1 moderator, 1 assistant

### One-on-One Interviews

- Non-WIC Breastfeeding Women and Local Employers
- 6 participants, 1 Interviewer
- Interview questions with mothers were identical to Focus Group #1's questions
- Interview questions for employers were adapted for the demographic
- Responses were documented during the interview and analyzed as one focus group
- ❖ Discussions were individually recorded and transcribed.
- ❖ Participants' responses were categorized into Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and put into an Excel spreadsheet to determine frequency of responses and themes.
- ❖ Responses were ranked based on frequency mentioned or affirmed to determine the top 4 responses for each SWOT category.

## Results

The following chart depicts the themes most discussed and overwhelmingly agreed upon across all focus groups.

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Breastfeeding friendly hospitals</li> <li>2. Outpatient clinics &amp; support groups</li> <li>3. Accepting culture</li> <li>4. WIC &amp; Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program</li> </ol>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of breastfeeding education for medical providers</li> <li>2. Not treating mother &amp; baby together as a dyad</li> <li>3. Lack of timely intervention</li> <li>4. Lack of enough space to pump or breastfeed in public</li> </ol>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better communication of resources for medical providers and mothers</li> <li>2. Prenatal &amp; family education</li> <li>3. Better communication &amp; collaboration via local breastfeeding coalition</li> <li>4. Texting support program</li> </ol>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorrect breastfeeding information or lack of support from medical providers</li> <li>2. Returning to work</li> <li>3. Lack of family support</li> <li>4. Lack of education for breastfeeding women</li> </ol>

### Next Steps

Prevalent practical responses to the weaknesses and threats above in the discussions were:

- Seminars or brown bag luncheons offered for medical community. Presenter with same credentialing as attendees.
- Creation of an educational breastfeeding handout for providers to give patients at Well Child Checks.
- Foundation of a Northern Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition.
- Comprehensive list of resources easily accessible online for both breastfeeding mothers and medical providers.
- Prenatal education for women catered to include families and significant others.
- Breastfeeding education included in hospital birthing classes.
- Texting peer counselor program for non-WIC participants through local hospitals.
- "Lactation Spaces" in community and workplaces.

## Strengths & Limitations

### Strengths:

- Focus Groups allowed for exploratory responses, flexibility, and brainstorming.
- Group setting allowed for networking and collaboration amongst community organizations in breastfeeding community.

### Limitations:

- Participants needed several months of advanced notice to participate. Because of scheduling conflicts, 2 of the 5 planned Focus Groups (Employers Focus Group and a subsequent Breastfeeding Mother Focus Group) did not take place. Phone interviews were used in place of these focus groups.
- Cold calls were time consuming and did not produce many participants.
- Recruiting a large number of participants willing to participate on a volunteer basis proved to be difficult.

## Conclusion

The results of this study will be used for further grant writing and project implementation. Two projects are underway:

1. Formation of a Northern Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition which will begin meeting early 2015.
2. A comprehensive breastfeeding resource database will be accessible on the coalitions website for providers and mothers.

*Screenshot from Northern Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition's Website*



## Citations

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). Breastfeeding Report Card [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/2014breastfeedingreportcard.pdf>.