**Baby-Friendly™ Initiative in New Brunswick**

With its Baby-Friendly™ Initiative (BFI) Policy, New Brunswick is embarking on a new journey of BFI to protect, promote and support breastfeeding as a strategy to increase the health and well-being of children and families.

### What is Baby-Friendly™ Initiative?

The Baby-Friendly™ Initiative (BFI) is an international program jointly developed by World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in the early 1990s to optimize breastfeeding outcomes for mothers and babies by:

- creating a health care environment where breastfeeding is the norm, and
- improving the quality of care through incorporation of evidence-based practices to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in hospitals and in the community.

To support the continuum of care, the Baby-Friendly™ Initiative (BFI) includes guidelines for Hospitals (The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding) and the Community (The Seven Points for the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding in Community Health Services).

The New Brunswick Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Advisory Committee has combined guidelines from the WHO’s Ten Steps and the Seven Points to further support the need for collaboration among Hospitals, Community Health Centres and Public Health Services providing care to families with infants and young children in promoting, supporting, and expanding breastfeeding. The guidelines also are a key component of preparing for being designated Baby-Friendly™.

### Why choose the BFI Way?

The Department of Health and the New Brunswick Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Advisory Committee recognize that:

- breastfeeding is a key to the health and well-being of New Brunswickers,
- a population health approach is necessary to re-establish breastfeeding as a cultural norm.

Based on experience from around the world, it is evident that full implementation of the Baby-Friendly™ Initiative program is associated with a significant increase in breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity rates. It is also associated with a reduction of negative child health outcomes and related health care costs.

### Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Evidence-Based Guidelines

- Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff and volunteers.
- Train all health care staff and volunteers involved in the care of mothers and babies in the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the policy.
- Inform pregnant women and their families about management of breastfeeding and hazards of artificial feeding.
- Help mothers initiate breastfeeding as soon as possible, preferably within the first half-hour.
- Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation if they should be separated from their infants or be unable to breastfeed for any reason.
- Support mothers to establish and maintain exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and encourage sustained breastfeeding beyond six months with appropriate introduction of complementary foods.
- Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated according to World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF Guidelines.
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families.
- Practice rooming-in: allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
- Encourage breastfeeding on demand and support mothers to establish and maintain exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months with appropriate introduction of complementary foods.
- Promote collaboration between health care providers, breastfeeding support groups and the local community.

### Where becomes Baby-Friendly™

The Baby-Friendly™ designation:

- benefits everyone: the mother and her child, the families with infants and children, caregivers and the community as a whole
- promotes the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding in hospitals and in the community
- demonstrates that a community agency or hospital is committed to implementation of the Baby-Friendly™ Initiative program is associated with a significant increase in breastfeeding rates. It is also associated with a reduction of negative child health outcomes and related health care costs.

When the BFI assessment criteria are met, BCC awards Baby-Friendly™ designations.

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### The Process for obtaining Baby-Friendly™ designation is established by the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) and consists of:

- completing a self-assessment with the help of the BFI Self-Assessment Tool and/or an informal site visit by the provincial BFI coordinator
- passing a Pre-Assessment (typically takes on full day) conducted by a BFI assessor and
- going through a 2 to 4 day External Assessment by a team of BFI assessors.

### How can a Hospital or Community Agency receive the Baby-Friendly™ designation?

To be designated Baby-Friendly™ the hospital or community agency must agree to:

-act in accordance with the combined guidelines from the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) and includes guidelines for Hospitals (The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding) and the Community (The Seven Points for the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding in Community Health Services).

The New Brunswick Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Advisory Committee is the provincial authority. It provides information, support and pre-assessments for NB hospitals and community agencies working to implement the BFI evidence-based practices.

### How many Baby-Friendly™ designations have been awarded?

By July 2001, 15,000 hospital worldwide were designated Baby-Friendly™. In Canada, there are only three hospitals, one birthing centre and two Community Health service centres that have received this designation, none of which are in the Atlantic provinces.

### Questions?

To learn more about Baby-Friendly™ Initiative, visit www.gnb.ca, keyword: health