

Alexandra Marine & General Hospital

## Breastfeeding Promotion Using Technology: Growing BIRCH

Breastfeeding Information Resource for the County of Huron  
Presented by: Marie Greer-King, NP-PHC



Best of the Past...Innovative Future

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## The Community Breastfeeding Projects Grant

- Awarded by Best Start by Health Nexus



Ontario's maternal, newborn and early child development resource centre  
Centre de ressources sur la maternité, les nouveau-nés et le développement des jeunes enfants de l'Ontario

by/par health **nexus** santé

- \$25, 000
- Virtual Baby Project approved for funding January 22, 2015

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## Objectives of Virtual Baby

- To build and improve relationships between the AMGH Obstetrical Program and the community (i.e. patients, MVMC, Huron County Health Unit)
- To develop & launch a web based tool to improve access to evidence-based breastfeeding resources, links and videos
- Target population: Breastfeeding women in Huron County with lower education levels, lower income levels and/or younger maternal age

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## Huron County Stats

(according to most recent Census data)

- Huron County has a higher percentage of youth age 15-19 than the average for Ontario
  - 7% of Huron County's total population are youth age 15-19, compared to 6.7% of Ontarians
- Huron County has a lower overall education level than the Ontario average
  - 54.7% of Huron County's population has only a high school diploma/equivalent or less, compared to 45.4% of Ontarians
- The average annual income level for full time workers in Huron County is \$14,000 less than the Ontario average.

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## Something else to keep in mind...

- Huron County lacks a public transportation system and due to the vast geographic area and harsh winters, it can be difficult for residents to travel to appointments or resources

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## Huron County Stats

(per the Huron County Health Unit - Aug 2013 to Jan 2015)

Exclusive breastfeeding rates are low in hospital but then drop even more before seen by the Huron County Public Health Nurse

Mother age	n	In hospital		At entry to service		Some breastfeeding
		Initial/En	Exclusive	Exclusive	Some breastfeeding	
< 20	11	91%	55%	45%		82%
20-24	51	96%	73%	65%		90%
25-29	175	95%	73%	69%		93%
30-34	160	91%	68%	61%		89%
35-39	54	94%	78%	72%		93%
40+	23	96%	65%	65%		96%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>65%</b>		<b>91%</b>

How can we improve exclusive breastfeeding rates in Huron County?

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**Focus Group #1**  
**Female High school Students**

- How do they access health info?
  - By googling on the internet – trust sites with .net or .org more than .com
  - No print material
  - No social media as don't want friends to know what they are asking
  - Trusted adult (family member or friend)
- All participants plan to breastfeed in the future despite no education in health class (all they know is from seeing breastfeeding by family/friends in the community)

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**Focus Group #2 & #3**  
**Breastfeeding Mothers**

- Range in age from 21 to 32
- All with annual incomes less than \$40,000 (majority of them less than \$20,000)
- Majority with high school or less than high school education

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**Focus Group #2 & #3**  
**Breastfeeding Mothers (cont'd)**

- How do they access breastfeeding resources?
  - Google searches – have to be careful of sites
  - Public Health Nurse/Lactation Consultant
  - Prenatal clinic visits
  - Prenatal classes
  - Online groups
  - Primary care practitioner (doctor, NP, nurse)
  - Limited print resources (Breastfeeding Matters book)

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### Focus Group #2 & #3 Breastfeeding Mothers (cont'd)

- What barriers/challenges exist?
  - Poor latch/nipple pain/baby not getting enough milk
  - Didn't know what to expect
  - Feeding baby in public
  - Not having supports available locally
  - Lack of after hours breastfeeding support
  - Lack of understanding of local clinics and breastfeeding resources

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### Prenatal Clinic Survey

(convenience sample of 16 patients between July 8 and 29, 2015)

- Range in age from 19 to 41
- Majority with annual incomes less than \$60,000
- Minority with high school or less than high school education
- Several of the same themes as breastfeeding mothers focus groups related to how they access breastfeeding resources and the barriers/challenges that they think exist

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### Reflecting on the needs of the community

- Access to breastfeeding resources at any time of the day and from anywhere
- Information about local infant feeding clinics and resources
- Being able to trust the video, link or resource found on the internet

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## Worked with our community partners

- To compile a list of resources, links and videos that give accurate, evidence-based information
- To develop a web-based search engine to search through these resources
- Result is BIRCH

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**BIRCH**  
*Breastfeeding Information Resource for the County of Huron*

A search engine for evidence-based breastfeeding resources, links and videos.

Developed by the Alexandra Marine & General Hospital Obstetrical Program and supported by a grant from Best Start by Health Nexus.

[www.amgh.ca/resources](http://www.amgh.ca/resources)

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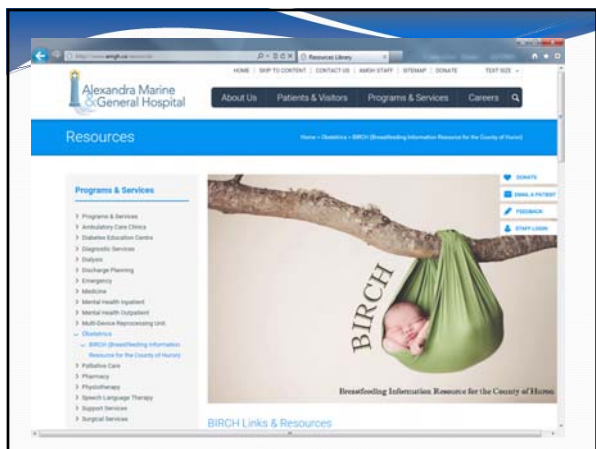
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Alexandra Marine & General Hospital

Resources

Programs & Services

- 1. Programs & Services
- 2. Ambulatory Care Clinics
- 3. Distance Education Centre
- 4. Diagnostic Services
- 5. Endoscopy
- 6. Emergency
- 7. Imaging
- 8. Intensive Care
- 9. Mental Health Outpatient
- 10. Multi-Disciplinary Reproductive Unit
- 11. Obstetrics
  - BIRCH (Breastfeeding Information Resource for the County of Huron)
- 12. Palliative Care
- 13. Pharmacy
- 14. Physiotherapy
- 15. Speech-Language Therapy
- 16. Support Services
- 17. Surgical Services

BIRCH Links & Resources

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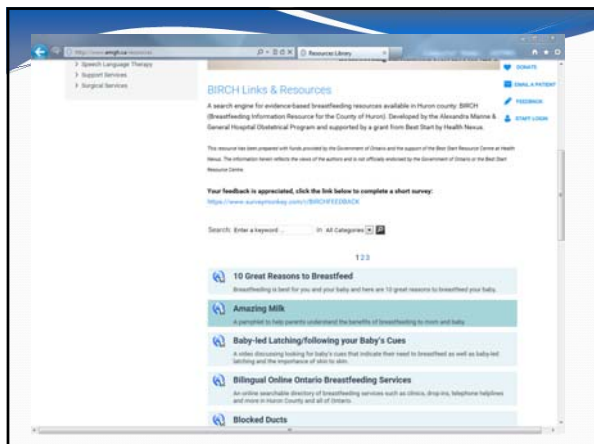
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### BIRCH Launch August 26, 2015

- Article in Goderich Signal Star submitted by team
- Reprint article in AMGH Happenings
- Party for AMGH Obstetrical team, staff and our community partners (MVMC & Huron County Health Unit)




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### Telling people about BIRCH

- Using iPads to show our prenatal clinic patients BIRCH (at ~28 to 30 weeks gestation)
- Presentation at AMGH Executive Leadership Team Meeting and Staff Forum
- Presentation at BFI Implementation Workshop
- Presentation at Huron Community Breastfeeding Group at Huron County Health Unit
- Interview with Goderich Signal Star resulting in second article
- Using Facebook to share link to BIRCH

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## Telling people about BIRCH

- Postcards given out in prenatal clinic, @ MVMC & @ HCHU
- Pens
- Tote bags



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## Next Steps

- Gather feedback re: the site and who is using it and what they are looking for
  - Challenge is to get people to give feedback
  - Only 1 survey so far... "Great information... great job"
  - Using metrics to see how many hits, most popular resources, etc.
    - 336 visits to BIRCH between July and December 2015
    - Most popular resources:
- Gather up to date stats re: exclusive breastfeeding rates in Huron County – are we making a difference?
  - This will be ongoing over next 2-3 years
  - Working with the epidemiologist at HCHU to ensure statistically significant

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## Project Sustainability

- Will be part of NP role at AMGH to look for new breastfeeding resources and update BIRCH
- Will also continue to monitor feedback surveys and metrics and make changes as needed
- Will continue to work with our internal OB committee and our community partners at MVMC and Huron County Health Unit

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Questions or Comments?  
Thank you!  
[www.amgh.ca/resources](http://www.amgh.ca/resources)



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