Breastfeeding Promotion Using Technology: Growing BIRCH
Breastfeeding Information Resource for the County of Huron
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Best of the Past...Innovative Future

The Community Breastfeeding Projects Grant
- Awarded by Best Start by Health Nexus
- Virtual Baby Project approved for funding January 22, 2015

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
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.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother age</th>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Exclusive</th>
<th>Reunited</th>
<th>Exclusive breastfeeding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OVERALL
- Initiation: 474
- Exclusive: 93%
- Reunited: 71%
- Exclusive breastfeeding: 65%

How can we improve exclusive breastfeeding rates in Huron County?
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)

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

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)
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

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

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
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

www.amgh.ca/resources
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)

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
**Telling people about BIRCH**
- Postcards given out in prenatal clinic, @ MVMC & @ HCHU
- Pens
- Tote bags

**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

**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
Questions or Comments?
Thank you!
www.amgh.ca/resources