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Anticipatory Guidance on Breastfeeding Support in Vermont

UVMHC Family Medicine – South Burlington, VT

Ian Guertin, MS3 – April 2022

Dr. Clara Keegan

Dr. David Reisman

Problem Identification and Description of Need

Breastfeeding is associated with health benefits, and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months and some breastfeeding for 1 year

The United States Healthy People 2030 objectives^[2] include:

- Increasing the proportion of infants exclusively breastfed at 6 months to 42.4%
- Increasing the proportion of infants breastfeeding at 1 year to 54.1%

Vermont ranks near the top among states in the U.S. for each category but has not met the target for exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months^[3]

Breastfeeding education is positively associated with rates of breastfeeding initiation and continuation^[4,7]

Providing anticipatory guidance to prenatal patients on local resources for breastfeeding education and support would improve awareness of critical resources within the community

“Prenatal breastfeeding education is critically important to inform pregnant women about the infant and maternal health benefits of breastfeeding, strengthen their intention to breastfeed, elicit and address perceived barriers, and identify key sources of support.”^[5]

Public Health Cost and Unique Considerations

- “Babies who are breastfed have lower rates of asthma, obesity, gastrointestinal tract infections, necrotizing enterocolitis, type 2 diabetes, ear infections, respiratory infections, and sudden infant death syndrome”^[7]
- A study published in *Pediatrics* found that total medical costs for never-breastfed infants was between \$331 and \$475 per infant more than the costs incurred by breastfed infants in the first year of life.^[1]
- The Vermont Breastfeeding Strategic Plan: 2020 – 2022 includes action steps related to increasing awareness of breastfeeding education among pregnant Vermonters

Strategy 7 & 8: Access to Breastfeeding Info & Information and Social Marketing

ACTION STEPS	LOCUS	PARTNERS
In partnership with families, communities, and payors, secure funding for and develop and implement a multi-pronged marketing campaign that raises awareness and provides education targeted at: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pregnant Vermonters• Partners and circles of support (grandparents, friends, etc.)• Early care and education providers• Workplaces• Health care providers	Statewide	Health Department; campaign to be informed by entities at all levels, including health care organizations, community organizations, and families

Community Perspective

- “Figure out your support system beforehand and don’t wait”
 - “There’s a community of people out there to help once you have your baby. Set up your support and have a phone call.”
 - “Donor milk can extend time while establishing supply and breastfeeding”
- Amy Wenger, RN, IBCLC, Vermont Donor Milk Center Executive Director**

- “Prenatal education is important”
 - “Concern about weight and soreness of are both common. Soreness of some type may occur in up to 80% of patients”
 - “The most important information prenatal patients can have about breastfeeding is information on a good latch, signs that show if a baby is getting enough, and how to find local help”
- Mary Bibb, IBCLC**

- “Supplementation with donor milk saved my baby’s life; it meant everything.”
 - “I would 1000% choose donor milk over formula”
- New mother and recipient of donor milk**

- “I think the most helpful thing for prenatal patients to know would be that [breastfeeding is] hard and there are lactation consultants out there.”
 - “It’s helpful to know that a lot of women struggle and that supports are available”
- New mother in Vermont**

Intervention and Methodology

1. Reviewed literature on barriers to breastfeeding and the effectiveness of interventions

2. Researched local breastfeeding support resources in Vermont

3. Compiled a list of high yield educational material and local support resources

4. Created anticipatory guidance that can be provided to prenatal patients with their after-visit summary highlighting this material

Result

Breastfeeding Resources in Vermont

Breastfeeding Facts

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and some breastfeeding for 1 year
- Breast milk is free and includes almost all the nutrients your baby needs for the first 6 months
- Breastfeeding is associated with health benefits
- Many families are unable to or choose not to breastfeed
- Babies can also get good nutrition from formula

Recommendations Before Baby Arrives

- Learn about options for feeding your baby
- Identify local supports that can help if challenges arise
- Recognize that many families have challenges with feeding. If you are having difficulty, you are not alone!

Local Resources for Support

Breastfeeding classes

- Beginnings Childbirth
- Lactation Resources

<https://beginningschildbirth.com/>

<http://lactationresourcesvt.com/>

Group support

- La Leche League

<https://www.lllmarivt.org/findagroup>

Lactation consultants

- Available in newborn nursery, by appointment, for in-home visits, and virtual
- Often covered by insurance
- Detailed list of lactation consultants in VT including contact information at website below

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/family/wic/you-can-do-it>

Helpful Websites

Should I Breastfeed my Baby?

- *Information to help you choose how to feed your baby*

<https://www.uvmhealth.org/medcenter/wellness-resources/health-library/uz1667>

Vermont Health and WIC Breastfeeding

- *Links to breastfeeding information, resources, and laws in Vermont*

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/breastfeeding>

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/family/wic/wic-breastfeeding>

La Leche League International & KellyMom

- *Detailed information about many topics related to breastfeeding*

<https://www.llli.org/>

<https://kellymom.com/>

Vermont Donor Milk Center

- In Vermont, 40% of newborns need supplemental feeding in the first few weeks
- The Vermont Donor Milk Center helps support families during that critical time with pasteurized donor human breast milk
- Reasons for supplementation with donor milk include low milk supply, preterm birth, difficulty with latch, adoption, and many more
- See website for more information about receiving or donating milk: <https://vtdonormilk.com/>

Evaluation of Effectiveness

Two methods could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention:

1. Conduct a focus group comprised of patients who did and did not receive this material to learn about their experiences and their ease of accessing support.

2. Collect data on breastfeeding rates of patients who received this material at 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months and compare with the overall rates for Chittenden county.

Recommendations for Future Projects

Develop additional educational material for prenatal patients about breastfeeding

- Information and helpful videos on a good latch
- Information about signs that a newborn is well-fed
- Information about common challenges and solutions
 - Tongue-tie
 - Sore nipples
 - Engorgement
 - Mastitis
 - Low supply

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