



Creating a healthy baby network to support breastfeeding among Latino families in Worcester, Massachusetts

SUMMARY

Breastfeeding provides many benefits for baby and mother. For baby, it provides quality nutrition and protection against illnesses. For mother, it can reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension.¹ Since October 2019, Latino families have accessed a range of culturally-appropriate and bilingual (English/Spanish) services that support breastfeeding in Worcester, Massachusetts. Family Health Center of Worcester (Family Health), and UMass Memorial Health Maternal Fetal Medicine (UMass) created an integrated network to support breastfeeding among Latino families, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-funded Worcester Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) project and the Worcester Healthy Baby Collaborative.

¹Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Breastfeeding benefits both baby and mom. Accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/features/breastfeeding-benefits/index.html> on 8.17.2022.

²Worcester Healthy Baby Collaborative. Breastfeeding Data Analysis. October 2021.

³Cululative report to the CDC for the Worcester REACH program , 10/2019-8/2022.

CHALLENGE

Between January 2018 - October 2021, the Worcester Healthy Baby Collaborative found that the majority of Latino (56%) and non-Latino families (60%) delivering at UMass planned to exclusively breastfeed, but that few succeeded in exclusively breastfeeding even within the infant's first few days of life. Upon hospital discharge, only 18% of Latino families and 27% of non-Latino families were exclusively breastfeeding. The report also identified a need for bilingual/bicultural staff and evening/weekend lactation support.²

PATIENT EXPERIENCE

“I prepared for myself to be a new mom with all lessons from group, provider, and advocates. I didn't have any problem for feeding because I learned from other women. I shared with my family why I was confident to take care of my tiny baby and I will share with my friends at my work, and in [my community] about the prenatal group, and Baby Café at Family Health Center.

Quote: Parent, Family Health Center of Worcester

SOLUTION

Partners created a network of bilingual/bicultural breastfeeding education and support for Latino families at both health care agencies, using multiple funding sources. Family Health hired bicultural/bilingual staff for its Centering Pregnancy prenatal education program, Baby Café breastfeeding support group and Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program. They offered virtual Baby Café breastfeeding support groups to better accommodate varying family needs. The UMass Memorial Maternal and Fetal Medicine Department offered bicultural/bilingual lactation support services, hired a bicultural/bilingual Community Health Worker (CHW) to refer families to community services, and created a special lactation support group for mothers of infants with a cleft lip or palate.

RESULTS

Since October 2019, these program improvements provided breastfeeding education and support to more than 2,619 families, including 1,181 Latino families.³

To put it another way, 1,181 families is more than the number of students who attend a local high school!

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

The partnership will continue to expand bicultural/bilingual services. As next steps, it will work to increase referrals to Baby Café and offer these groups with bilingual Certified Lactation Consultants previously trained by the partnership. UMass will offer increased lactation support for newborns who are admitted into the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

TAKE ACTION

Help spread the word about these bilingual/bicultural breastfeeding support services that are available in Worcester, Massachusetts.

PROVIDER EXPERIENCE

“Today has been the most rewarding day for me as a CHW! I helped a patient tremendously and found her a great breastfeeding coach! We went to WIC and she was able to get benefits for her and her 5-day-old baby girl.”

Quote: Community Health Worker, UMass Memorial Health Maternal Fetal Medicine Prenatal Clinic

For More Information

Worcester Healthy Baby Collaborative
Breastfeeding Resource Site:
www.worcesterhealthybaby.org.

Worcester REACH:
www.worcesterma.gov/public-health/reach.

Contact:

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The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).