

# Improving Mothers' Experiences with Milk Expression, Pumping, and Breastfeeding Initiation:

An education model for hospital nurses to support sustained breastfeeding in northern New Jersey

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## OBJECTIVES

- Compare Healthy People 2020 and current US and NJ breastfeeding statistics in three categories: (1) ever breastfed, (2) infants receiving formula before two days of life, and (3) exclusively breastfeeding at three months.
- Describe the proposed model for lactation education which includes: (1) lecture, (2) role play, and (3) hands-on skills sessions.
- Discuss the importance of offering education to nurses in a variety of formats.

## BACKGROUND

The Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey (Partnership) is a nonprofit organization licensed by the New Jersey Department of Health. The Partnership's Regional Breastfeeding Committee serves as a forum for lactation consultants and nurses to collaborate and support breastfeeding initiatives in the northern NJ.

Support provided by nurses during the hospital stay is associated with sustained rates of breastfeeding. New Jersey's Department of Health amended Hospital Licensing Standards which included requiring maternity staff to demonstrate competency in providing breastfeeding support in order to increase breastfeeding rates throughout the state.

New Jersey breastfeeding rates are highlighted in the following table:

Breastfeeding Rates for Infants Born in 2015			
	Ever breastfed	Breastfed infants receiving formula before two days of age	Exclusive breastfeeding through three months
Healthy People 2020 Target	81.9%	14.2%	46.2%
United States – National	83.2%	17.2%	46.9%
New Jersey	82.3%	25.7%	24.4%

Source: CDC National Immunization Survey (NIS) 2016-2017

The Partnership's Regional Nursing Professional Education Committee conducted an assessment identifying educational needs of hospital maternity nurses. The Partnership's Regional Breastfeeding Committee agreed to develop and provide a training focusing on basic breastfeeding support and skills including initiation, milk expression, and pumping. Improving nurses' knowledge and comfort level in providing guidance to patients would positively impact sustained breastfeeding.

## METHODS

Training content was chosen based on:

- Survey responses from hospital nurses to clarify area of learning need
- Focus group discussion with maternity staff who worked primarily evening/night shifts to hone in on specific areas of importance

A lactation consultant with a strong background in community breastfeeding support and experience as a night shift nurse was engaged to write and present lectures and lead role plays.

Program was designed to include eight small group skills sessions addressing latch/positioning, hand-expression, and pumping. The goal was to positively impact nurses' comfort level and ability to incorporate teaching these new skills into professional practice. Hospital lactation consultants volunteered their time and expertise, working in pairs to develop and guide these skills sessions.



## RESULTS

- This initiative has become a staple in regional breastfeeding education, provided five times from 2017 to 2019.
- Two hundred and thirty five nurses were trained.
- The evaluation results demonstrated a strong impact on professional practice for the majority of participants as shown in the table.

Post-program Evaluation Summary					
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Breastfeeding knowledge	94%	98%	94%	100%	100%
Comfort level in providing support	95%	97%	94%	100%	100%
Ability to teach colleagues	95%	100%	94%	100%	100%
Three Month Follow-up Survey Summary					
Breastfeeding knowledge	100%	100%	92%	100%	100%
Comfort level in providing support	100%	90%	92%	100%	100%
Ability to teach colleagues	100%	100%	92%	100%	100%

Participants reported to incorporate the following into clinical practices:

- Teach parents to watch for feeding cues
- Ask more open ended questions
- Help mother meet her breastfeeding goals
- Promote skin to skin as continuing into the postpartum period
- Incorporate hand expression into teaching for NICU mothers
- Have skills sessions during yearly hospital mandatory education

## CONCLUSIONS

Collaboration between the Partnership, speaker, and hospital lactation consultants continues to be vital to the success of this initiative and must be gratefully acknowledged.

Lactation consultants who developed and presented skills sessions have acted as role models and resources to other lactation consultants in the region, fostering professional development. Individual skills sessions have been replicated by lactation consultants for hospital annual competency trainings.

Integration of the full model as an on-going educational resource should be explored. Future study of impact on regional rates of sustained breastfeeding is indicated.