

**The Baby-Friendly™ Initiative in Community Health Services:
Implementation and Evaluation**

Submitted to:

**Population Health Fund
Health Canada**

Sponsoring Partner

Breastfeeding Committee for Canada

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October 22, 2001

Summary of the Project
The Baby-Friendly™ Initiative in Community Health Services:
Implementation and Evaluation

The purpose of this project is to implement and evaluate the Baby-Friendly™ Initiative (BFI) in community health services in Canada and to facilitate this implementation through provincial and territorial BFI committees partnering and working with the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) to achieve this goal. Although the objectives of this project will be accomplished through partnerships with BFI committees in each province and territory, childbearing women, their infants and families are the primary beneficiaries of implementing the BFI in community health services. They are the benefactors of this program.

The objectives of this project are: to facilitate collaboration between provincial and territorial BFI committees and the BCC to work together towards implementing BFI in community health services by meeting annually and communicating monthly; to prepare 24 BFI assessors from different regions in Canada for evaluating community health services that apply for BFI designation; and to have 10 community health centres designated as Baby-Friendly™ and an additional 40 community health services accomplished three of the seven steps required for community health services BFI designation.

It is anticipated that the breastfeeding assistance that mothers will be provided by health professionals following hospital discharge in areas where BFI has been implemented will contribute to an increase in the duration rates of breastfeeding, however, because of the short time frame of the project and limited surveillance of breastfeeding rates in Canada this outcome is not included as specific to this project. Monitoring change in breastfeeding rates particularly in regions that implement BFI is critical to the BCC and will continue after the project is completed.

The BCC is committed to extending the BFI to community health services as are other countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the Netherlands. The BCC has adapted the UK's *Seven Point Plan* for use in Canada to designate community health services that meet the criteria as Baby-Friendly™. This program is based on the principles of the WHO/UNICEF hospital program. The developed documents must be printed and disseminated throughout Canada.

Feedback from provincial and territorial committees indicates that if they are to implement the BFI in community health services in their jurisdictions, they want to partner with BFI committees in other provinces and territories and the BCC to develop and share strategies to move BFI in community health services forward. This project will facilitate strengthening these partnerships to work together to achieve the goal of Baby-Friendly™ designation of community health services, a strategy for ultimately increasing breastfeeding longevity rates and enhancing the health of infants and mothers in Canada.