

## Abstract – 2014 Nutrition Leadership Network

Submitted by Patrice Isabella, Utah Department of Health

### Assessment of Breastfeeding Supportive Maternity Care Practices in Utah Hospitals

#### Background/Introduction

Research indicates that breastfeeding is associated with decreased risk for infant morbidity and mortality, as well as maternal morbidity and provides optimal infant nutrition. In Utah, while 85.7 percent of mothers start out breastfeeding, only 24.8 percent of babies are exclusively breastfed at six months (National Immunization Survey data, 2011). The *Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*, published in 2011, identified 20 key actions to improve support for breastfeeding. One of those key actions is to “ensure that maternity care practices around the United States are fully supportive of breastfeeding.”

#### Project Goals, Methods

Recent work has been undertaken by the Utah Department of Health's (UDOH) Bureaus of Maternal and Child Health and Health Promotion to improve breastfeeding supportive practices in Utah hospitals. These bureaus carried out an *Assessment of Breastfeeding Supportive Maternity Care Practices in Utah Hospitals* survey in the summer of 2013. The survey was based on the CDC mPINC survey, and distributed by mail to the 43 delivering hospitals throughout the state. An intern conducted telephone follow up surveys with hospitals that did not initially respond.

#### Results, Summary/Discussion

40 of the 43 delivering hospitals throughout the state completed the survey. Survey responses indicate that Utah hospitals are performing very well in some areas; however, there are weaknesses in a few areas when it comes to supporting breastfeeding. This knowledge enables UDOH to focus on the steps that have the biggest potential for impact. The majority of hospitals surveyed indicated they would like to participate in a collaborative process with other hospitals, supported by UDOH, to help integrate and adopt the *Ten Steps for Successful Breastfeeding Hospitals* outlined by the World Health Organization in their facilities. While being designated as “Breastfeeding Friendly” is the gold standard for hospitals, numerous Utah hospitals have cited cost as a major barrier to becoming designated; it currently costs over \$10,000 to become designated “Breastfeeding Friendly” by the U.S. Baby Friendly Hospitals Initiative. UDOH is exploring the possibility of establishing state level criteria for hospitals to be designated as breastfeeding friendly.

#### People involved in UDOH:

Maternal and Child Health Bureau: Nan Streeter, Lois Bloebaum, Laurie Baksh, Judy Harris, Phyllis Crowley

Bureau of Health Promotion: Heather Borski, Rebecca Fronberg, Patrice Isabella

Director, Division of Disease Control and Prevention: Teresa Garrett

For survey results please contact Lois Bloebaum at [lbloebaum@utah.gov](mailto:lbloebaum@utah.gov).

