Breastfeeding Support in Clinics

More and more mothers today choose to give their infants the healthiest start in life possible by breastfeeding. Thanks to abundant research, all major health organizations today promote breastfeeding as the perfect form of infant nutrition, and call on local communities to provide support. Breastfeeding rates in Wisconsin are increasing, and new mothers are seeking out health professionals who are sensitive to their need for accurate information and support.

What can you do to protect and support breastfeeding in your facility?

- Provide general training for your staff on addressing barriers to breastfeeding, and ways to accurately support mothers experiencing problems.

- Provide staff who are specially trained to handle breastfeeding problems. Ideally, this should include a lactation consultant certified by the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE). (Or IBCLC, which would be the designation the clinic would look for in hiring.)

- Establish a supportive breastfeeding policy for your clinic. Be sure staff are aware of the policy as well as current breastfeeding guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

- Make referrals to appropriate community resources. Local breastfeeding resources should be readily available to all staff.

- Provide a supportive environment for breastfeeding. This includes positive messages about breastfeeding displayed in the clinic, appropriate educational materials (not produced by formula companies), and appropriate accommodations for breastfeeding mothers (including employees) in your clinic. This should include efforts to help mothers feel comfortable breastfeeding wherever they wish in the clinic, as well as a place set aside for breastfeeding or pumping in private, if desired.

- Encourage expectant mothers to breastfeed by discussing benefits, addressing barriers, and providing information, including community resources to assist them.

- Provide simple recognition to mothers who choose to breastfeed.