



PRESS RELEASE

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National Breastfeeding Initiation Rate Meets Healthy People 2010 Goal

More work to be done in the District

Seventy-five percent of babies born in the United States in 2007 have breastfed to some extent, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2010 Breastfeeding Report Card released today. Although the 75 percent breastfeeding initiation rate meets the nation's Healthy People 2010 goal, only 43% are still breastfeeding at 6 months.

The District's rates shows similar trends with 64.3% of infants initiating breastfeeding (a decrease from the 2006 rate of 69.6%) and only 44.1% breastfeeding at 6 months. Although the AAP recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, only 11.7% of babies born in DC in 2007 breastfed exclusively for at least 6 months. In addition, significant racial and economic disparities persist for breastfeeding rates among DC residents.

The DC Breastfeeding Coalition (DCBFC) has been trying to remove barriers that prevent women from breastfeeding for a long duration. For the past 2 years, the DCBFC has worked with Washington, DC birthing facilities to help them adopt as many of the 10 steps of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) as possible. The Coalition has worked nationally and locally to enhance support of employed mothers through legislation and improved business practices.

"We have made some great strides, but there is still a lot to do in DC to make sure all mothers and babies get the support they need to breastfeed successfully" says DC Breastfeeding Coalition president Dr. Sahira Long.

In fact, according to the CDC Report Card, Washington, DC has one of the highest rates of infants receiving formula before 2 days of life (33.9%), and the lowest ratio of Board Certified Lactation Consultants per live births (0.99/1000 births) nationally. It is also does not yet have any birthing facilities designated as Baby Friendly (BFHI).

"We want this CDC report to help motivate hospitals, medical providers and employers to work together to help families get off to the best start with breastfeeding and continue for as long as they would like," says Dr. Sahira Long.

The Breastfeeding Report Card is available at
www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard.htm

For information about the DC Breastfeeding Coalition visit www.dcbfc.org