



Perinatal e-News

LA BEST BABIES NETWORK



Healthy Babies. Our Future.
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www.LABestBabies.org

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Promoting Breastfeeding in Hospitals:

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August is Breastfeeding Awareness Month

Network Members Unite to Help Hospital Increase Exclusive Breastfeeding Rates

California Hospital Medical Center's exclusive breastfeeding rates have increased by 218%, from 2006 to 2007, thanks to the perinatal community in L.A. County, especially the Harbor Corridor Best Babies Collaborative (BBC).

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants be exclusively breastfed until six months of age. Yet, when members of this collaborative met with Lynn Yonekura, MD, director of community benefits at California Hospital Medical Center, to review the hospital's breastfeeding policy, they noted that in 2005 the hospital's breastfeeding rate was 2.6%, significantly below the L.A. County average of 24.9%. This finding spurred the collaborative to take action.

"The Best Babies Collaboratives are powerful advocates for the patients they serve, patients who often feel powerless to advocate for themselves," says Yonekura, who also is senior advisor to LA Best Babies Network. The Best Babies Collaboratives consist of more than 40 agencies that provide coordinated perinatal and interconception care (care between births) through intensive case management, outreach, social support and health education.

To help mothers initiate and sustain exclusive breastfeeding for six months, Best Babies Collaborative case managers teach pregnant clients about breastfeeding, as well as ask them how they plan to feed their baby. Case managers follow up with mothers who wish to breastfeed during visits in the hospital and the immediate postpartum period. By providing this support, case managers in the Harbor Corridor Best Babies Collaborative learned that their clients' decision to exclusively breastfeed after giving birth was not always honored by California Hospital Medical Center.

To create a more breastfeeding friendly environment, the collaborative worked with the hospital staff to revise its breastfeeding policy so that it promoted exclusive breastfeeding. They also worked to help the hospital increase breastfeeding rates and its capacity to enhance their breastfeeding services and resources.

The partnership among Dr. Yonekura, the hospital's perinatal nursing staff and the Harbor Corridor Best Babies Collaborative helped California Hospital Medical Center:

- establish a Breastfeeding Quality Improvement Committee
- revise the hospital's breastfeeding policy to make it consistent with that of a [Baby Friendly Hospital](#)
- open an employee lactation room
- move toward "Banning the Bags," i.e., formula-marketing discharge gift bags
- re-establish childbirth and breastfeeding classes.

As a result of these efforts, California Hospital Medical Center received grant funding to participate in the "Birth and Beyond California: Breastfeeding Training and Quality Improvement Project," which was sponsored by the California Department of Public Health and implemented in L.A. County by PAC/LAC and the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles.

"Our involvement in 'Birth and Beyond California' is part of our ongoing commitment to improve breastfeeding rates," says Yonekura. "Our future goal is for California Hospital Medical Center to become a [Baby Friendly Hospital](#)."

Breastfeeding Promotion Needs Improvement in U.S. Hospitals

Many U.S. birth facilities fall short in promoting breastfeeding to new moms, according to a [Morbidity and Mortality Report](#) issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Approximately 2,700 U.S. birthing facilities were surveyed and scored on a scale from 0 to 100. California scored 69 out of 100 points.

According to the CDC report, the following actions were noted to discourage breastfeeding:

- 65% of facilities recommended that new mothers limit suckling time
- 45% of facilities reported giving pacifiers to healthy newborns
- 70% of facilities provided gift packages with samples of infant formula
- 24% of facilities supplemented breastmilk with sugar water or regular water
- 17% of facilities reported giving newborns a supplemental food source for the first feeding.

The CDC recommends the following practices to support breastfeeding during the hospital stay:

- skin-to-skin contact: placing newborn skin-to-skin with the mother immediately after birth
- educating new moms about breastfeeding
- early and frequent breastfeeding: breastfeeding begins at birth and throughout the hospital stay
- exclusive breastfeeding: supplemental feeding is only used in case of complications
- rooming-in: mothers and babies are roomed together
- follow-up after discharge: in-person postpartum visits for new moms.

To learn more about improving breastfeeding support in hospitals, visit www.cdc.gov/Features/WelcomingBaby.

Network Members Partner to Promote Teen Pregnancy Prevention

More than 50 people attended an art exhibition featuring teen pregnancy prevention posters created by L.A. County high school students. The Metro area Healthy Births Learning Collaborative (HBLC) sponsored the art show, which capped off its teen pregnancy prevention-themed poster contest.

Due to high teen pregnancy rates in the Metro area, this collaborative organized the art contest to engage teens and promote teen pregnancy prevention. "If we reach one teenager and he or she learns about preventing teen pregnancy, we increase the possibilities of having healthy pregnancies and birth outcomes," says Irma Radillo, community outreach specialist for LA Best Babies Network.

More than 40 students participated and the top 20 posters

were displayed at LA Mano Press, an art gallery located in downtown L.A.

"The contest and art show became avenues for teens to disseminate information among their friends, as well as a forum for parents to initiate a conversation with their children about sex," adds Radillo.

LA Best Babies Network extends their gratitude to the following organizations who are members of the Metro area Healthy Births Learning Collaborative:

- Care1st Health Plan
- Children's Bureau: NuParent
- Children's Hospital Los Angeles: Project NATEEN
- Children's Institute Inc.
- Coalition for Community Health
- Good Samaritan Hospital
- Latino Family Institute
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- Los Angeles Unified School District: McAlister High School
- Los Angeles Unified School District: Teen Parent Program
- March of Dimes Greater Los Angeles Division
- Maternal and Child Health Access

Click [here](#) to view photographs of the event.

Brief Highlights Methods to Improve Preconception Health

Trust for America's Health has released a brief on preconception health "[Healthy Women, Healthy Babies](#)," which identifies the challenges of promoting preconception care and recommends actions to improve preconception care.

The preconception period is crucial to improving birth outcomes. At the preconception visit, women can be screened for chronic conditions such as diabetes and obesity. Healthcare providers can provide women who engage in high-risk behaviors, such as smoking and drinking, with the guidance and resources needed to end that behavior.

Key recommendations to improve preconception care

include:

- ensure that existing Medicaid (known as Medi-Cal in California) policies are implemented
- improve Medicaid by expanding coverage for all women
- expand primary care programs such as community health centers, infant mortality reduction programs, family planning programs, etc.
- invest in preconception health research.

The Los Angeles County Preconception Health Collaborative, is an example of the integration of preconception health into public health practice. The goal of the collaborative is to utilize existing services in a connected system to improve women's chances of reaching their optimal health.

Learn more

View the brief "[Healthy Women, Healthy Babies.](#)"

View the Network's article "[Integrating Preconception Health Into Public Health.](#)"

CDC Releases 2005 Birth Data

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics has released 2005 birth data for all states with information on:

- birth rate
- preterm births
- low birthweight
- prenatal care
- mother's ethnic background
- age
- method of delivery

Users can customize the data to create tables, charts and graphs.

According to the data, in California:

- 548,882 babies were born
- 37,630 babies were born low birthweight
- 471,030 women obtained prenatal care in the first trimester.

In L.A. County:

- 150,377 babies were born
- 10,984 babies were born low birthweight
- 136,052 women obtained prenatal care in the first trimester.

For more information on L.A. County data, visit

www.labestbabies.org/resources/perinataallnd.htm

To view U.S. data, visit www.cdc.gov/nchs/VitalStats.htm

Pertussis, Tetanus and Diphtheria Recommendations for Women and Infants

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which advises the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has issued their recommendations for preventing [pertussis](#), tetanus and [diphtheria](#) in pregnant/postpartum women and infants.

The recommendations were published in the CDC's May 2008 issue of the [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#).

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