Innovations in Peer Counseling: Breastfeeding Support Beyond WIC Sites

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Outline

- District of Columbia peer counseling (PC) initiatives
  - Peer counselors in hospitals
  - Peer counselor partnerships with home visiting programs
  - Peer counselor use of text messaging
  - Lactation support via Apps
  - Breastfeeding campaign strategies

- Tips and strategies for collaboration
Learning Objectives

1. Develop strategies to extend breastfeeding support beyond the WIC site

2. Identify effective tactics for successful collaboration
Breastfeeding Disparities in D.C.

- Low-income African American women living in Washington, D.C. have significantly lower breastfeeding initiation rate (57%) than white low-income women (97%)\(^1\)

- Only 26% of African American women in Washington, D.C. continue to breastfeed for six months, compared to 75% of white women\(^1\)

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## District of Columbia Breastfeeding Support Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2014</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of WIC Peer Counselors</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WIC Breastfeeding Initiation Rates</strong></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<td><strong>Percentage of live births at BFH(^2)</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<td><strong>DC Ever Breastfed(^2)</strong></td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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Peer Counselors in Hospitals

- Grant awarded by Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)

- Sub-granted to the D.C. Breastfeeding Coalition (DCBFC)

- Peer Counselor visits prenatal and post-partum floors in hospitals and sees clients in outpatient lactation center in southeast Washington, D.C.

- Makes referrals to WIC sites and secures primary care appointments
Data Collection

- DCBFC sends reports to DOH to monitor progress of the Peer Counselor (PC)

- **Data collected**
  - Number of peer counselor clients
  - Number of appointments made
  - Impact on breastfeeding initiation rates

  BF initiation increased from 56.6% to 62% since project start!
Lessons Learned and Moving Forward

- **Lessons Learned**
  - Establish an official MOU prior to the project start
  - Communicate project goals to all parties involved

- **Moving Forward**
  - Continue with current PC project at United Medical Center and expand to Medstar Washington Hospital Center
  - Hire PC at Providence Hospital
  - Compare project outcomes
Peer Counselors in Home Visiting Programs

- Peer counselors are trained in home visiting and receive referrals from Mary’s Center for Maternal and Child Health’s Home Visitation Program

- Peer counselors provide breastfeeding support in the home and make WIC appointments/referrals

- Partners: Mary’s Center, Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Program, DOH Home Visiting Program Department
Peer Counselor Texting Program

- BfedDC Text Message System provides two-way texting and informational text messages to WIC participants

- Increases reach and provide convenient and timely breastfeeding support

- Partners: PreventionPays Text Service, DC Local WIC Agencies, Santa Barbara, CA WIC, The George Washington University, Catholic University
Lactation Support App

- Pacify app provides 24 hour access to breastfeeding support from an IBCLC
- IBCLC can address issues outside of PC scope of practice
- Partners: Pacify, Mary’s Center WIC, DC Breastfeeding Coalition, Virginia WIC
Breastfeeding Campaign

- “Breastfeeding is a Family Affair” campaign launched July 1, 2016 on Pandora Radio
- Data tracking provided by Pandora Radio
- Partners: Pandora Radio, DC WIC, Maryland WIC (Howard County)
Tips and Strategies for Collaboration

- Recruit organizations with a common goal
- Build mutually-beneficial relationships
- Identify strengths
- Embrace innovation