

Going “Baby-Friendly” with COPE Health Solutions

The Problem

California law (Health and Safety Code Section 123367) requires all hospitals providing perinatal services to implement a maternity-focused program in line with the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund’s (UNICEF) “Ten Steps to Effective Breastfeeding”ⁱ through the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) or a comparable process by January 1, 2025.ⁱⁱ Currently, less than one in five qualifying hospitals in California meet this requirement.

The BFHI aims to improve maternity care by emphasizing the benefits of breastfeeding for child development and by promoting mother/baby bonding experiences.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition to audits on breastfeeding techniques and mother-baby interaction, the designation method required by Baby-Friendly USA (BFUSA) involves a prescriptive regimen of staff and patient education.

Through a \$500,000 grant provided by First 5 LA, St. Francis Medical Center (SFMC) in Lynwood began its Baby-Friendly journey in October 2011. The hospital was faced with the task of launching the project, building the communication strategy and auditing the entire hospital staff and perinatal patient population. Sylvia Bavarsad, RNC, BSN, IBCLC, Women’s Health Center/Maternity Clinical Educator and Lactation Consultant, the hospital manager tasked with implementing this program, recognized that staffing constraints and workload volumes would be a barrier to successful implementation and compliance with the law. Due to limited resources, Sylvia was the only full time employee designated by SFMC to implement the BFHI project, along with intermittent support from two part-time hospital employees.

The Solution

SFMC has been home to the COPE Health Solutions Clinical Care Extender (CCE) Internship and PrepStep-RN Program^{iv} since October 2009,

“St. Francis is absolutely indebted to every group and individual who assisted to bring us this far in the Baby Friendly process. No group, though, has made more of an impact than these fantastic CCEs and PrepStep-RNs. We would not have been where we are in the Baby Friendly process without them.” –Sylvia Bavarsad, SFMC BFHI Project Manager

a partnership which provides over 425 active volunteer interns to support the hospital’s clinical and administrative workforce. The hospital leveraged this resource to supply the extra hands needed to drive the project forward.

BFHI uses the “4-D Pathway” implementation model for hospital accreditation. D1 – **Discovery** includes establishing executive support and completing a self-assessment. At SFMC, D2 – **Development** was challenged from the onset due to the lack of a necessary task force for the initiative – the hospital could only provide one employee. This stage also requires the curriculum and materials for hospital-wide trainings to be developed. D3 – **Dissemination** requires educating and training the entire nursing staff and patient population.

A partnership between SFMC’s BFHI and the COPE Health Solutions’ programs was the best-fit solution for an initiative faced with personnel needs. A team of eight CCEs and two PrepStep-RNs was assembled in order to complete the extensive amount of auditing required – a crucial element for the success of the Dissemination and Development phases. The team then received a four-hour training on the Baby Friendly process from Sylvia Bavarsad. Post training, each CCE intern provided four hours of assistance per week while the PrepStep-RNs provided 12 hours of assistance per week.

In addition to completing audits, CCEs and PrepStep-RNs also assisted with the creation of educational materials for staff and patients. The

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leadership and organized structure of the CCE and PrepStep-RN programs gave the BFHI at SFMC operational support, which enabled the BFHI to progress at an accelerated pace.

Outcomes

The use of CCEs and PrepStep-RNs facilitated the hospital in achieving its goal as follows:

- From December 2012 to December 2013, the CCEs and PrepStep-RNs of SFMC completed 100% of audits required for the D3 phase of the BFHI.
- Over the last 26 months, the CCE internship and the PrepStep-RN program provided the BFHI at SFMC with 1851 hours of support.
- The leadership of the CCE Internship assisted in the development of over 10 educational documents to be used in staff and patient education. Examples include postpartum staff booklets and breastfeeding charts to be placed in new mother patient rooms.

SFMC is currently in phase D4 – **Designation**, expecting to receive auditors from the organization in September 2014. In three years’ time, with only one full-time staff member allocated, SFMC now looks forward to achieving a coveted designation, making it legally viable as a perinatal facility in the future. Furthermore, SFMC will be the first institution to do so using the resources of the CCE and PrepStep-RN programs, effectively leveraging the programs to improve the implementation efficiency of a hospital-wide initiative.

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ⁱ World Health Organization, *The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding: The Special Role of Maternity Services* (Geneva, 1989).

ⁱⁱ California Senate. *An act to add Section 123367 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to public Health.* SB 402. Sacramento, 2013).

ⁱⁱⁱ Benefits to a hospital from the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative go beyond legal viability: The health benefits to patients of breastfeeding and mother-baby interaction have been widely accepted and researched, and the international health community has affirmed these benefits in a number of articles and declarations. Some of the commonly stated benefits of breastfeeding include infants receiving the complete mix of antibodies, nutrients and water necessary for the first six months of life. Also, breastfeeding supports the mother, by promoting a more rapid recovery from delivery while decreasing the risk of ovarian and breast cancer. Both mother and child benefit from immediate post-partum breastfeeding by decreasing the risk of desertion. See UNICEF, *1990-2005 Celebrating the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding: Past Achievements, Present Challenges and the Way Forward for Infant and Young Child Feeding* (Florence, 2005), 2-3.

^{iv} Clinical Care Extenders are volunteer interns interested in healthcare professions who assist in hands-on patient care. PrepStep-RNs are registered nurse volunteer interns that also assist in patient comfort-care while receiving professional mentoring. For more information about the services provided by the COPE Health Solutions’ Health Care Talent Innovations programs, please visit <http://www.copehealthsolutions.org/services/health-care-talent-innovations>.

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Our Vision:

Our clients are leaders in adding value for consumers through innovations in population health management, talent development and alignment of financial incentives