

# News and Views from Baby-Friendly USA

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NYSBC Conference

3/27/25




Baby-  
Friendly  
USA

# Breastfeeding Benefits Both Babies and Mothers

## Benefits for Infants

Infants who are breastfed have reduced risks of:

- Asthma.
- Obesity.
- Type 1 diabetes.
- Severe lower respiratory disease.
- Acute otitis media (ear infections).
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Gastrointestinal infections (diarrhea/vomiting).
- [Necrotizing enterocolitis \(NEC\) for preterm infants](#) .



## Benefits for Mothers

Breastfeeding can help lower a mother's risk of:

- High blood pressure.
- Type 2 diabetes.
- Ovarian cancer.
- Breast cancer.



# Breastfeeding Reduces Infant Mortality and Health Care Costs

- 10 million US births reviewed
- Breastfeeding significantly reduced infant mortality.
  - Geographic variations in these associations ranging from a 44% reduction in odds for overall post-perinatal deaths in the mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions to 21% in the Southeast region. (Ware et al, 2023)
- Cost of not breastfeeding:

Medical and death costs... depending on method of calculation, resulted in total costs consistently exceeded \$100 billion annually for the USA (Jegier et al, 2024)

# SummerStyles Survey Items 2021

Questions	# Analyzed Respondents	Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Disagree
If a mother breastfeeds her baby, she may be less likely to develop breast cancer later in her life	4061	23.97%	66.69%	9.34%
If a mother breastfeeds her baby, she may be less likely to develop high blood pressure later in her life	4060	15.56%	76.00%	8.43%
If a mother breastfeeds her baby, she may be less likely to develop Type 2 diabetes later in her life	4060	15.43%	74.36%	10.21%
I believe women should have the right to breastfeed in public spaces	4063	69.02%	21.60%	9.38%
There should be paid maternity leave for workers	4068	77.50%	17.47%	5.03%
Foods that babies eat influence what they eat as older children	4064	62.00%	30.13%	7.86%
Baby and toddler foods should not have added sugar	4062	72.97%	22.53%	4.49%

# Breastfeeding in Public

- Women who hesitate to breastfeed in public
  - *underestimate the health benefits* of breastfeeding; those who have that knowledge are more likely to breastfeed.
- Men who are aware of breastfeeding benefits are more likely to have a positive view of breastfeeding in public.
- **This speaks to a dire need for public education regarding the benefits of breastfeeding as well as its normalization within daily life.** <https://drexel.edu/medicine/academics/womens-health-and-leadership/womens-health-education-program/whep-blog/breastfeeding-in-public-why-so-taboo/#:~:text=It%20has%20been%20demonstrated%20that,and%20as%20a%20sexual%20entity.>

"Breastfeeding in public is legal in 50 states.  
Let's make it feel that way." <https://www.usbreastfeeding.org/>

# Exclusive Breastfeeding

- Importance
  - Health Outcomes
  - Disparities
  - Recent changes CMS and TJC, discontinued use of PC-05 (Exclusive Breastfeeding)
- Is exclusive breastfeeding under threat?
- Can't get exclusivity without initiation in the hospital

# Impact of BFHI - Exclusive Breastfeeding

- Study exclusive breastfeeding (EBF/PC-05) in hospital (Patterson et al, 2021)
  - Area Deprivation Index (ADI): low, medium, high
  - Baby-Friendly designation associated with significantly higher EBF across all ADI categories
    - 6.9-11.2% ( $p < 0.01$ )
- Baby-Friendly designated hospitals had 9% higher in-hospital exclusive breastfeeding compared to non-Baby-Friendly hospitals
  - Designated hospitals smaller disparity in exclusive breastfeeding between neighborhoods with low vs. high relative poverty status. (Bookhart et al, 2024)

# Accountability

## **Reported adherence to the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding is Significantly Higher Among Baby-Friendly Hospitals**

(Thomsen et al , 2024)



# Baby-Friendly USA



**515 Designated Facilities**

**>900,000 babies born in Baby-Friendly facilities**

**~25% of US births**

**50 working towards designation**

**~2600 total birthing facilities in US**

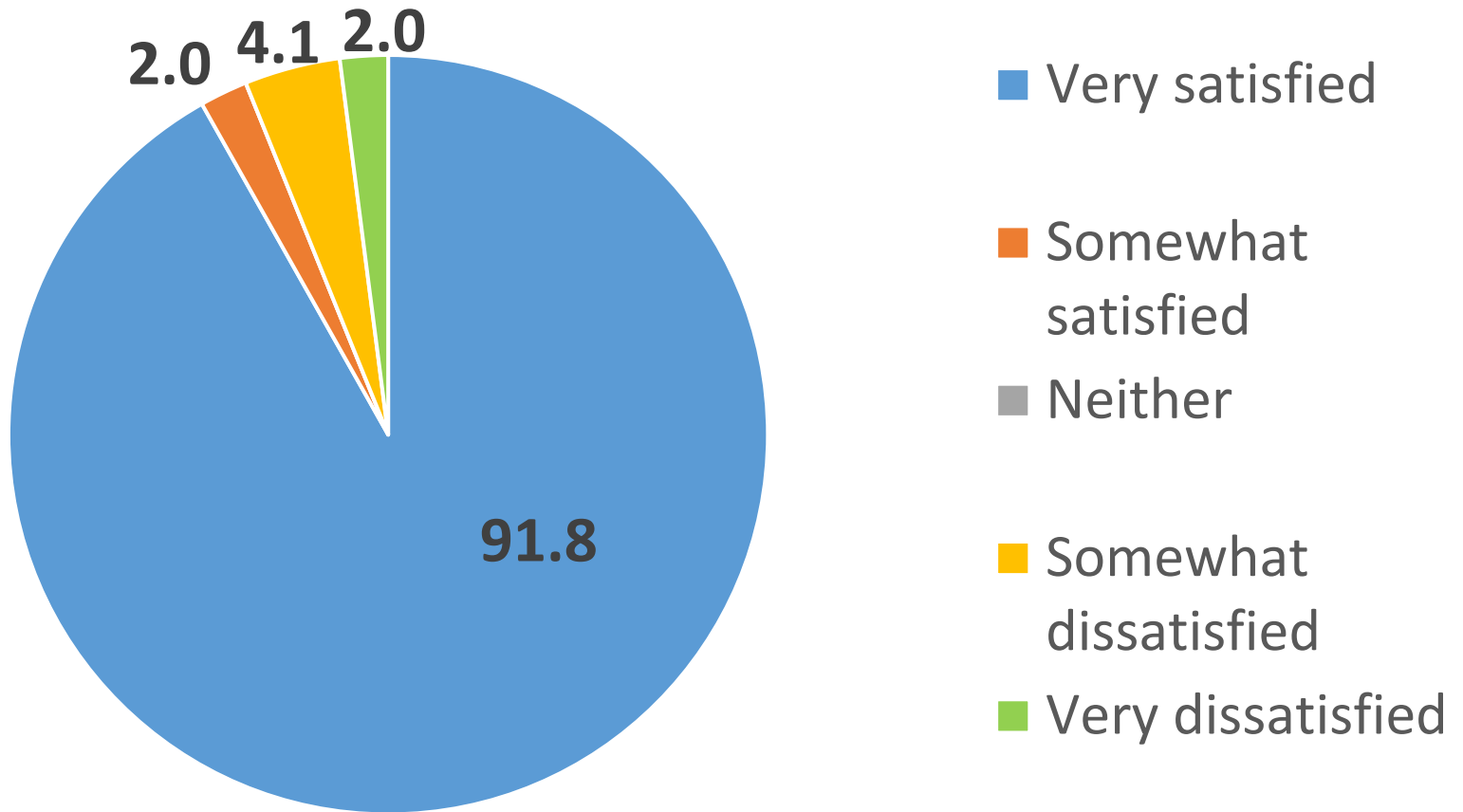
# NYS Hospitals

- 44 currently designated
- 9 implementing, 4-D pathway

# Assessment Success

- Most common # of items failed is 3 out 81 assessed
- Items most commonly failed (~25% of facilities)
  - 1.1: Fair Market Price (FMP)
  - 3.1, 3.2: **Prenatal education**, interview with prenatal patients
  - 5.2: Hand expression, mother interview question
  - 7.7: Documentation of separation >1 hour

# Experience with BFUSA Assessment



# Most Commonly Failed Items

20-27% of facilities

- 1.1: Fair Market Price (FMP)
- 3.1, 3.2: **Prenatal education**, interview with prenatal patients
- 5.2: Hand expression, mother interview question
- 7.7: Documentation of separation >1 hour

# Implementation of BFHI

- BFHI designed to provide:
  - Equitable care, that is individualized, and patient centered
- *“Baby-Friendly is mother-friendly when the mother and nurse collaborate to find a balance between meeting the mother’s needs while keeping in mind the best interest of the baby.”*


(McRae and Miraglia, 2023)

# Why Do Mothers Stop Breastfeeding Early?

MOTHERS NEED SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THEIR BREASTFEEDING JOURNEY



**60%** of mothers stop breastfeeding sooner than they planned.



Certain factors make the difference in whether and how long babies are breastfed:

- Hospital practices
- Education and encouragement
- Policies or supports in the workplace
- Access to community supports

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/breastfeeding-cdcs-work-508.pdf>

# Conclusion

- Need to ensure the *system* supports mothers to meet their breastfeeding goals
  - Prenatally, birth hospitalization, post-partum
- Communication of health benefits of breastfeeding
- Breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding, needs to be vigilantly monitored and promoted



# Contact Information

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