



# NEW COLLABORATION ACROSS HEALTH SYSTEMS IN PEORIA WORKING TO IMPROVE SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING

## ILLINOIS STATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

### AT-A-GLANCE

Health system partners in Peoria, Illinois are teaming up to work to improve support for breastfeeding in the region, especially for low-income families and families of color. With collaboration spurred by the Illinois State Physical Activity and Nutrition (ISPAN) program, the Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) brought together champions from two hospital systems in Peoria to begin regular discussions to improve continuity of care and community support for breastfeeding. The early results of the collaboration are promising for improved breastfeeding support.



### PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGE

While about 84.2% of babies born in 2017 in Illinois were ever breastfed, only 52.9% were still breastfeeding at 6 months. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in Illinois in 2017, only 23.9% of babies were exclusively breastfed for 6 months<sup>1</sup>, which is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.<sup>2</sup> Disparities in breastfeeding initiation and duration rates persist for low-income women, Black women, and women living in rural areas. In central Illinois, 75% of babies born in the region are ever breastfed. For low-income women (as indicated by those who qualify for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program), that rate drops to 64%, with only 46% of babies exclusively breastfed during their first few days of life at the hospital.<sup>3</sup> A statewide environmental scan and focus group with moms conducted as part of the ISPAN program found that inconsistent information across health care and breastfeeding support providers, inadequate support from healthcare providers and worksites, and lack of access to supportive services were major barriers to breastfeeding in the central Illinois region.

### APPROACH

As an ISPAN partner, ICAAP worked to identify local breastfeeding champions in Peoria, Illinois to promote policy, process and procedural changes that could improve the continuity of care and community support for breastfeeding in the region. Two ICAAP champions – Beth Seidel, an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant at Unity Point-Methodist Hospital, and Dr. Shelly Shallat, the Medical Director of the newborn nursery at OSF HealthCare and ICAAP member – came together with the Central Illinois Breastfeeding Task Force (CIBTF), the Peoria City/County Health Department (PCCHD) WIC Program, Heartland Health Services (HHS) Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Armstrong and East Bluff Clinics, and the University of Illinois College of Medicine to facilitate change. Dr. Shallat and Ms. Seidel have pulled together teams from both hospitals and the PCCHD WIC Program for monthly meetings to align their work and better support families who choose to breastfeed in central Illinois.



*ISPAN is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in collaboration with the Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity, administered by the Illinois Public Health Institute*





*Supporting mothers and babies to be successful with breastfeeding is of the utmost importance. Connection with families during all stages of life and across different environments provides multiple opportunities to work together. Partnering to improve the health of our community has been an inspirational, positive experience. We are all looking forward to what the next few years will bring.*

-Dr. Shelly Shallat, Medical Director of Newborn Nursery, Newborn Hospitalist, OSF Healthcare Children’s Hospital of Illinois; Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics member



## IMPACT

- OSF HealthCare is adopting a procedure around promoting “rooming-in,” meaning keeping babies close to moms to support breastfeeding.
- Seven staff from HHS Armstrong and East Bluff and OSF HealthCare will be trained as certified lactation specialists to increase breastfeeding support at the two FQHCs and three rural clinics.
- Residents in the University of Illinois College of Medicine Pediatric Residency Program and OB Residency Program rotating through OSF HealthCare were provided with updated trainings and processes on breastfeeding support including shadowing a lactation consultant, embedding documentation during newborn and prenatal clinic visits, and annual breastfeeding grand rounds training.
- OSF HealthCare has increased their virtual breastfeeding support services for patients, and Unity Point Health Methodist Hospital has begun to provide lactation telehealth services. Both hospitals are expected to continue their telehealth services, eliminating transportation barriers and reducing COVID-19 risks for patients
- The hospitals, WIC agencies, and HHS Armstrong have adopted the same prenatal education program- Ready,Set, BABY- to provide evidence-based messaging across systems.
- ICAAP and the Central Illinois Breastfeeding Task Force launched the Central Illinois Professional Breastfeeding Network. Breastfeeding advocates from hospitals, early care and education, and more will meet quarterly to improve breastfeeding continuity of care by sharing resources, aligning education tools, and building relationships between sectors.
- CIBTF members assisted in creating short breastfeeding support videos for the Illinois Breastfeeding Virtual Support Videos on common breastfeeding challenges and concerns.

## WHAT'S NEXT

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<sup>1</sup>Illinois Department of Public Health. Breastfeeding: Data: Breastfeeding Report Card: DNPAO: CDC. (2020). Retrieved August 10, 2020, from <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/content/breastfeeding-data-breastfeeding-report-card-dnpao-cdc>  
<sup>2</sup>American Academy of Pediatrics. Breastfeeding (Policy Statement). (n.d.). Retrieved August 10, 2020, from <https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/breastfeeding-policy-statement.html>  
<sup>3</sup>Newborn Breastfeeding Rates, Illinois Residents 2016-2017 Data Source: Birth Certificates (all years final data) Last updated: 3/26/2019. Retrieved April 2020

## ABOUT ISPAN

ISPAN is a five-year, \$4.6 million initiative to implement physical activity and nutrition interventions designed to make it easier for Illinoisans to live the healthiest lives possible. ISPAN is particularly focused on low-income and rural communities and communities of color that have been the hardest hit by chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Illinois Public Health Institute is collaborating with the Illinois Department of Public Health, local health departments in three regions of the state, and a unified coalition of organizations from multiple sectors to tackle the root causes of obesity and related chronic diseases.

## CONTACT

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