

TO: HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATORS
NURSE MANAGERS, OBSTETRICS

SUBJECT: BREASTFEEDING PROMOTION

We are writing to announce the forthcoming release of 2008 in-hospital breastfeeding initiation rates. California in-hospital infant feeding practices are monitored by the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division utilizing data obtained during routine newborn screening for genetic diseases. These data will be posted on the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Breastfeeding Statistics website at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/statistics/Pages/BreastfeedingStatistics.aspx> .

We encourage your hospital to utilize these data to integrate Quality Improvement efforts within the maternity care setting to ensure policies and practices are supportive of breastfeeding.

The CDPH is interested in developing partnerships with California hospitals and health care providers to increase exclusive breastfeeding, not only at hospital discharge, but into the first year of life. Most mothers who choose to breastfeed at admission will do so throughout their hospital stay if the hospital supports breastfeeding through policy and practice. Attached is a list of resources to assist you in developing hospital policies that support exclusive breastfeeding in the early post-partum period.

Please review your hospital's breastfeeding data to identify how successful your facility is in promoting and supporting breastfeeding, and take advantage of the attached resources and partners available to assist you with policy revisions. Working together we can take steps towards a more breastfeeding friendly hospital environment and ultimately improve the health of generations of Californians.

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