

BREASTFEEDING Connections

January 2021

This newsletter is intended to be viewed online to access the hyperlinks. In addition to receiving it via email, you can find the electronic version at www.Michigan.gov/Wic.

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Breastmilk Contains Antibodies to SARS-VoV-2 (COVID-19)

Milk from lactating moms may hold antibodies to fight COVID-19 infections in their babies.

In a study published in [iScience](#) (November 20, 2020) breast milk samples were collected from eight donors who had *recovered* from COVID-19 and from seven donors who had *suspected* COVID-19. All of the samples collected had antibodies reactive to the virus's spike protein. The data indicates that a strong antibody response in human milk after infection should be expected. Mothers could be passing viral immunity to their babies.

BREASTFEEDING AND COVID-19 VACCINATION

MDHHS is following the [CDC guidelines](#) regarding COVID-19 vaccination for breastfeeding women. Here is their current recommendation:

COVID-19 vaccination considerations for people who are breastfeeding

There is no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in lactating women or on the effects of mRNA vaccines on the breastfed infant, or on milk production/excretion. mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant. People who are breastfeeding and are part of a group recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, such as healthcare personnel, may choose to be vaccinated.

This newsletter is prepared for Michigan WIC Staff to help them support breastfeeding families.

BREAST PUMP CLEANING DURING COVID-19

Do staff and clients have questions on how to clean breast pumps? Explore the following resources!

CDC [Fact Sheet](#) on How to Keep Your Breast Pump Kit Clean

- Medela: [COVID-19 Symphony Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations for Home Rental](#)
- Ameda [COVID-19 Response](#)
- Hygeia has not provided cleaning recommendations *specific* for COVID-19. Use CDC breast pump cleaning guidance provided above.

WIC breastfeeding staff can find more information on breast pumps on our [website](#).

Data Report: A Michigan PRAMS Brief for Programs and Providers, Breastfeeding & Racial Equity

[Michigan Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System \(PRAMS\)](#) is a project that gathers high quality, population-based data about maternal attitudes and experiences before, during, and after pregnancy. With the data collected from this survey, we can help improve the health of mothers and their babies throughout the State of Michigan.

The [Breastfeeding & Racial Equity Brief](#) found that breastfeeding *initiation* disparities are decreasing, but *duration* disparities are increasing. Breast pumps are a helpful tool for increasing duration and addressing disparity. Unfortunately, fewer breastfeeding black moms have a breast pump.

Health Equity in WIC: What are local and state agencies doing?

Although we have a long way to go, Michigan WIC is working to reduce our bias resulting in racial inequities. Some of this work includes:

- Stacy Davis, Regional Lactation Consultant, being selected by NWA to be a Health Equity Champion.
- Implementing Community Liaisons, whose role is to function as a bridge between WIC and hospitals within the Metropolitan Detroit area, to improve maternal outcomes and breastfeeding support.
- There is current development of a maternal mortality task force at the State office to address the issue of maternal mortality among communities of color.
- Michigan WIC hired a Social Determinants of Health Policy Analyst (Myra Lee) to promote health equity within every area of WIC.
- WIC partnered with other MDHHS staff and community partners to promote Black Breastfeeding Week and Native Breastfeeding Week during the month of August. Activities supporting breastfeeding within the Black and Indigenous communities were highlighted during the month of August.
- WIC Collaborated with IRTH Founder, Kimberly Seals Allers, on input for and promotion of the IRTH app. This App was developed to address the maternal mortality crisis within black and brown communities.

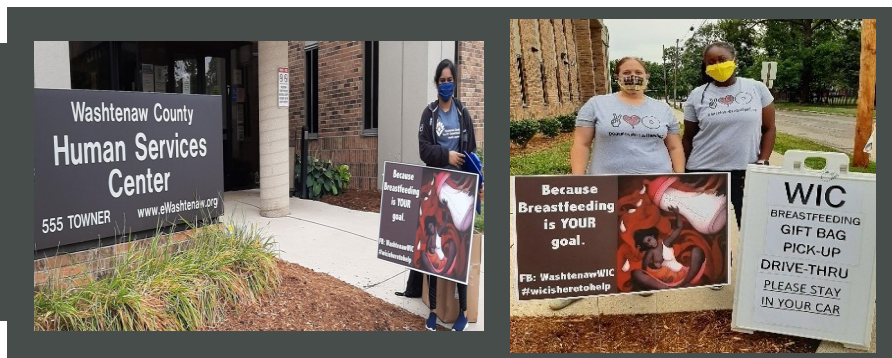
HOSPITAL PRACTICES NEED TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF BREASTFEEDING

A survey of 1,344 birth hospitals in the United States found that when hospitals put into practice COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures, those measures sometimes conflicted with evidence-based maternity care to support breastfeeding. Because of the pandemic, 17.9% of hospitals reported that in-person lactation support had decreased, and 72.9% reported discharging mothers and their babies <48 hours after birth. Limited support and early discharge puts families at risk for potential breastfeeding issues. Additional post-discharge breastfeeding support and follow-up care to ensure the well-being of the mother and her newborn may be needed. WIC staff are ideally suited to help monitor and support infant's growth.

Read the article at https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6947a3.htm?s_cid=mm6947a3_w

Additional resources about breastfeeding during COVID-19
[Evaluation and Management Considerations for Neonates at Risk for COVID-19 Care for Breastfeeding Women](#)

COVID ADAPTATIONS to Support Your Families



National Breastfeeding Month: Washtenaw County had large, outdoor posters made and a gift bag drive-thru.

Virtual Support/Warm Lines: Bay County's Goin' with the flow

Submitted by: Kristina Doyle, Breastfeeding Coordinator

COVID-19 can't slow us down! Bay County's lactation team continues to work hard to provide breastfeeding support to our breastfeeding mamas! When the pandemic hit, we started calling our pregnant mothers to reinforce breastfeeding during this time. We offered our families opportunities to learn about breastfeeding virtually. Our WIC and Breastfeeding Peer Manager, Amy Revette, got our staff set up with Zoom capabilities for more visual support. Our 24/7 Breastfeeding Warm Line is in full swing and we continue to respond to calls/texts from moms; provide phone education; and send scheduled texts with information for Cofeective, return to work, etc. Pumps and supplies are provided curbside with a follow-up email that includes instructions for pump operation, cleaning, storage, etc. We also utilize the Milk Expression link on the MDHHS WIC website and email videos that we feel may be helpful.



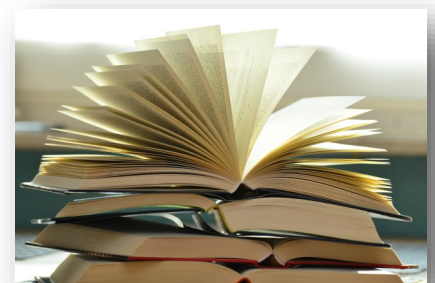
Bay County Staff Pictured (Pre-COVID-19)



The Macomb County WIC Program provided breastfeeding counseling services outdoors while wearing PPE. Macomb also offered group breastfeeding support using Google Meet.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW IBCLCS!!

- Stephanie Arredondo, IBCLC, Wayne County
- Margret Ann Fife, RD, IBCLC
- Amanda Kischuk, RD, CCLS, IBCLC, Oakland County Health Division
- Marcia Kwantes, MS, RD, IBCLC, InterCare Community Health Network
- Brooke Perry, MPH, RD, IBCLC, Genesee County Health Dept.
- Ellen Templeton, CLS, IBCLC, Health Dept. of Northwest MI
- Jezreel Vedula-Cardenas, RD, IBCLC, Calhoun County



LOVING SUPPORT AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

The Loving Support Awards application period is still open. Many of you are doing a phenomenal job of providing breastfeeding services to our families and should apply for this award to be recognized for your efforts. Winners may possibly receive a visit from the USDA Regional Office and/or public recognition. The 2021 application period opened on November 12th and will close on **January 15, 2021**. There are three levels of performance for this award: Gold, Premiere, and Elite. This approach recognizes three groups of agencies that include those that are demonstrating model practices, as well as those who are at varying stages of implementing exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support practices.

Local WIC agencies that have operated a peer counseling program for at least one year, which meets all of the required core components of the WIC Breastfeeding Model for peer counseling, formerly known as the Loving Support Model, are eligible to apply.

The Application, Application Instructions, and FAQ are available for download on the FNS public website. The award website can be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-priority-wic-program>
For questions contact Dionne Moore-Smith at mooresmithd@michigan.gov

COFFECTIVE CORNER

With the new year, we have exciting news to share! Coffective has launched [Community Match](#). The goal of this online platform is to connect local organizations with similar interests to improve coordination efforts for a greater impact in your community. Don't delay! Michigan WIC agencies, birthing hospitals, community groups, prenatal/outpatient clinics, home visiting programs and coalitions have already joined the movement!

Local organizations have used Community Match to:

- Expand organizational networks.
- Improve consistent messaging about breastfeeding and enhance continuity of care.
- Communicate changes in services and hospital practices, including changes due to COVID-19.
- Share and learn from the success of others via "How We Did It".
- And so much more!



Coeffective also offers coaching calls! These calls offer one-on-one guidance to WIC agencies to help prioritize your agency goals, challenges and community partnerships. Coaches offer assistance with reaching out to organizations, building client caseload, getting started with collaborative activities, using Coffective Materials effectively and the list goes on! Indicate your interest in [coaching](#) calls today!

Coeffective is excited to introduce their newest Coffective Coach, Michigan WIC's very own Mistel de Varona, IBCLC, RLC! Mistel is a public health professional with experience in the local WIC, public health, hospital, and coalition arenas. She has led community need assessments, strategic planning, maternal-child work groups, lactation education, virtual childbirth education and more. At Coffective, Mistel coaches communities to improve collaboration and health outcomes.

If you have any questions regarding Community Match or coaching calls, please contact Marji Cyril at CyruM@michigan.gov or Mistel at Mistel@Coffective.com

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Hello everyone! I'm Amina Clements and I've had the pleasure of working at the Genesee County WIC and Health Department for the last 8 years. I was a peer counselor for the first 5 years until I transitioned into my current position as the Breastfeeding Community Liaison. In my current role I help moms that are enrolled in WIC, act as a bridge for other moms in our community that may not know of or are not eligible for WIC, and provide them with the support to help them meet their breastfeeding goals. I have enjoyed finding new and convenient ways to reach out and help families, such as visiting moms at their home, after delivery in the hospital, or giving helpful resources and practical help during community events.

Most of my success of being a peer was founded on the concept of knowing what moms have experienced, because I had gone through many of the same struggles and triumphs while breastfeeding my two wonderful children. After my first child was born, I knew I wanted to breastfeed, but had no real idea of how it would go. I dealt with a very bad latch and a painfully high milk supply. Each feeding was painful, but I believed that was what it was supposed to be like from other friends and family sharing their struggles and disapproval of breastfeeding. After nearly two months of toe-curling feedings, I was hit with a lightning bolt, "If breastfeeding is something so natural and done so frequently, it SHOULD NOT be this painful!". I lucked up on the idea that more breast in her mouth, eliminated my pain. I then called every female relative to let them know that I had found the secret and we were all "doing it wrong"! I also understood that it is much easier to breastfeed for an extended period of time when you're not in pain, and it became my goal to teach every mom I came across the same thing....even if you were a pregnant stranger in line at the grocery store.

Though I love helping moms who really want to breastfeed, my job is always the most rewarding when I can educate a mom into breastfeeding when she was once adamant against it. About 5 years ago, a pregnant mom came into my office and told me before I could even greet her, that she was most certainly NOT breastfeeding. I have always been a firm believer that people can only make an informed decision when they are completely informed on the topic at hand. After debunking many myths and providing her with useful benefits of breastfeeding for her and baby, she said she would try it...with no guarantees. Months after, she returned to my office with her daughter for a visit and told me through tears, she was so happy that she tried breastfeeding and how much she enjoyed that time with her baby. I do not think she realized how much she impacted my life with her statement but, I strive to lend my support and help give every mom that same beautiful feeling.

ASK WINNIE: PEER COUNSELOR Q & A

Dear Winnie,

I've gotten a lot of questions from families about breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic. What should I say?

Signed, Michigan Amazing Peer Counselor

Dear Amazing PC,

Great question! Many families have concerns about how to continue breastfeeding during this pandemic. When I counsel families here are some of the things I think about.

Set the tone of the discussion:

Since in-person visits are not possible right now, use telehealth whenever possible. Be sure to use client names throughout the conversation. Congratulate her on her interest in continuing to nurse, despite all of her questions and concerns about COVID-19. Example: "It's great that you are providing such a great start for Ryan by providing your breast milk!". Remind her that you are there to help in meeting breastfeeding goals.

Affirm feelings with statements such as:

- What a great mom you are to be concerned about nursing during the pandemic.
- This is a common concern of new moms.
- I can identify with your worry.
- Many moms feel this way.

Use reflective and open-ended probing questions to clarify concerns:

- What are your concerns about nursing and COVID-19?
- How are you feeling about breastfeeding during this time?

This is a client-specific topic, so you may need to ask more detailed questions, such as:

- Have you been exposed to COVID-19? Do you currently have COVID-19?

Other Helpful hints:

- Ask your health care provider your breastfeeding questions *before* your baby is born.
- Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most babies and it provides protection against many illnesses.
- Breast milk is not likely to spread the virus to babies.
- New research shows your milk may actually have antibodies against the virus.
- Be sure to wash your hands frequently.
- There are different recommendations depending on whether you think you have COVID-19 or not. Follow the [CDC guidelines](#).

Thank you for all of your hard work making life easier for breastfeeding families. Whether it's a friendly bit of support during social isolation or building a trusting relationship that increases a client's self-esteem, you make a difference and we appreciate you.

Your Breastfeeding Partner,
Winnie

Listen, Observe, Validate, Empower.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Visit the [Provider Education](#) section of the MDHHS WIC Staff Breastfeeding page. There are a variety of webinars and conferences available here.

Date	Time	Organization	Title	Link
Jan 2021				
Jan 19, 2021	Early Bird Registration	Gold Lactation Online Conference	Various topics and presenters	https://www.goldlactation.com/conference/registration
Jan 26-28, 2021	All Day Virtual Conference	California Breastfeeding Coalition Summit	Various topics and presenters	http://californiabreastfeeding.org/breastfeeding-summit/
Feb 2021				
Feb 16, 2021	Watch anytime	Michigan Breastfeeding Network- Great Lakes Breastfeeding Webinar. (FREE)	Support for LGBTQIA25+ Birthing People & Families --Etecia Brown, CD	https://www.mibreastfeeding.org/webinars/
March 2021				
March 4-5, 2021	All Day Virtual Conference	WALC Breastfeeding Conference (Wisconsin Association of Lactation Consultants)	Various topics and presenters	http://www.walc.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/save_the_date_conference_20141-pdf/brochure/
March 16, 2021	Watch anytime	Michigan Breastfeeding Network- Great Lakes Breastfeeding Webinar. (FREE)	Serving Indigenous Families: Overcoming Barriers & Connecting Resources --Meredith Kennedy	https://www.mibreastfeeding.org/webinars/
March 29- June 30, 2021	Times vary	Gold Lactation Online Conference	Various topics and presenters.	https://www.goldlactation.com/conference/registration
April 2021				
April 2, 2021	Watch anytime	Michigan Breastfeeding Network- Great Lakes Breastfeeding Webinar. (FREE)	Demedicalizing Black Women's Bodies: Deconstructing Systems that harm Maternal Health --Janee Moore, MPH	https://www.mibreastfeeding.org/webinars/
April 20, 2021	Watch anytime	Michigan Breastfeeding Network- Great Lakes Breastfeeding Webinar. (FREE)	Implicit Bias: Race Based Disparities in Breastfeeding --TaNefer Camara, MS, IBCLC	https://www.mibreastfeeding.org/webinars/
Archived Webinars				
Available anytime.	Archived Webinar	Breastfeeding Grand Rounds School of Public Health University of Albany	Community Breastfeeding Support in A Time of Public Health Emergencies	Breastfeeding Grand Rounds (albany.edu)

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Questions/Comments
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WEBSITE SECTION FOR PEER COUNSELING

Did you know there is a section on the MDHHS WIC website focused on
Peer Counseling?

Check out the resources for peer counselors and managers [here](#).

