



# Ontario Breastfeeding Committee Newsletter

November 2001

## Welcome to our 1<sup>st</sup>. newsletter!

The Ontario Breastfeeding Committee (OBC) is pleased to have this opportunity to communicate with you since the decision to form a provincial breastfeeding committee came about from the many interested stakeholders in the province of Ontario.

OBC is a volunteer organization made up of health care professionals and consumers sharing a commitment to support, protect and promote breastfeeding in the province of Ontario. Committee members represent many organizations such as the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), Lactation Consultants of Southern Ontario, the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO), INFACT Canada, consumer organizations and interested individuals.

The OBC is responsible, in partnership, with the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) for the implementation of the WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in Ontario.

The OBC is here to be a voice for breastfeeding in Ontario, to promote, protect and support this very important health behaviour. We invite you to participate on our committee.

## Mission Statement

### Vision:

Breastfeeding is the norm for infant feeding in Ontario.

### Mission:

To protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the province of Ontario.

### Objectives:

- Oversee and facilitate the implementation of the Baby Friendly Initiative in Ontario.
- Develop partnerships and collaborative strategies to protect, promote and support breastfeeding as the Regional Authority for the Baby Friendly Initiative in Ontario by including multidisciplinary and multisectoral membership.
- Act as the contact between health facilities and the BCC for all matters related to the Pre-Assessment and External Assessment process, as outlined in the *'Hospital/Maternity Facility Guidelines for the Implementation of the WHO/UNICEF BFHI in Canada.'*
- Provide ongoing expert advice and recommendations on policy and guidelines to government, health facilities and professional organizations.

**The Ontario Breastfeeding Committee:  
The Provincial Contact for the  
Breastfeeding Committee for Canada –  
the National Authority for the  
WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital  
Initiative in Ontario.**

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From the Chair

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## Why is breastfeeding important?

Breastfeeding is a health behavior that must be supported, protected, and promoted. There is solid epidemiological evidence that exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months has short and long term health advantages. These health advantages are very evident during infancy in reduced ear, stomach, and respiratory infections but they also carry over into adulthood, with reduced incidence of Crohns disease, ulcerative colitis, and diabetes.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that "breastfeeding is an endangered practice that requires the support of everyone in society to nurture it back to its full strength. It requires the commitment on the part of health care institutions, decision makers, government and individuals in the community to ensure a totally 'Baby Friendly' environment". Breastfeeding is endangered by the fact that even though we have a large percentage (80%) of mothers and babies leaving hospital breastfeeding, there is only about 30% still breastfeeding by four to six months. Health care professionals have a major role to play in supporting breastfeeding. Our clinical practices, our political involvement and leadership play a major role in promoting a positive attitude to breastfeeding in society.

### Supporting, Protecting and Promoting Breastfeeding

The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative is an international program established by UNICEF and WHO as part of an international nutrition strategy and is based on the "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding "

The Breastfeeding Committee of Canada (BCC), a Health Canada initiative (1991) , is the national authority for the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative. The BCC changed Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative to the Baby Friendly Initiative to reflect the continuum of care for mothers and babies outside of the hospital environment. The BCC has identified the Baby Friendly Initiative as a primary strategy for the protection and, promotion, and support of breastfeeding. The BCC oversees and facilitates the implementation of the Baby Friendly Initiative in Canada but it the responsibility of the provincial authorities to implement the initiative in each province.

Canada has 1 hospital certified as a "Baby-Friendly Hospital" in 1999 -- the Brome-Missiquoi Perkins Hospital in Quebec. Since that time no other hospital has been certified "Baby Friendly".

### What is happening in Ontario?

Are there any hospitals attempting to become designated "Baby Friendly"? Please let us know.

## The 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

Every facility providing maternity services and care for newborn infants should:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within a half-hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed, and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breastmilk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming-in: allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers (also called dummies or soothers) to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

World Health Organisation, Geneva, Switzerland. 1998

## Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative progress by year

In 1992 there were 309 hospitals/maternity facilities world-wide designated "Baby Friendly".

In the year 2000 there were 14,993 "Baby Friendly" facilities - amazing global progress over the last eight years.

( *BFHI News* )

## From the Committee

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

After months of work to establish the Ontario Breastfeeding Committee, the executive would like to share information and invite the participation of interested parties in building a strong network of organizations and individuals who work to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in Ontario.

A list was started in 1998 of individuals who expressed interest in the formation of an Ontario BFI committee. We would like to expand the list as soon as possible, so that by January 2002, the OBC will be equipped with the human resources necessary to make real progress.

Other BFI Committees throughout Canada will be included in the network, and will be linked to the OBC web site, which we expect to be on-line by the end of the year.

It is expected that most of the communication of the OBC will at first be via electronic mail, with monthly meetings of the executive. An annual general meeting is planned early in 2002 to allow all members to meet personally and network. (Funding dependant)

As you will see from the organizational structure there are various sub-committees which need your support and we look forward your participation.

For further information please contact the executive members directly or for general inquiries and to be included on the membership list, please e-mail us at [ontariobreastfeedingcommittee@hotmail.com](mailto:ontariobreastfeedingcommittee@hotmail.com) or write to:  
The Secretary, OBC,  
Suite 8, 2915 Headon Forest Drive,  
Burlington, Ontario,  
L7M 3Z6.

Looking forward to the dynamic growth of the OBC and great networking with you all,

Yours sincerely

Joyce Ridge (Chairperson) and the Executive Committee of the OBC.



## Ontario Breastfeeding Committee Terms of Reference

### Organizational Structure:

- The executive of OBC consists of:

Chair, Chair-Elect, Past-Chair, and Chairs of the following sub-committees: Communication & Public Relations, Funding Developing, Finance, Education & Research, Policy, and Political Action.

- The executive of OBC shall be elected on a yearly basis, with a two - year commitment encouraged for the chair.
- Executive positions may be held for a minimum of 1 year, and a maximum of 4 years.
- Chair-Elect to be successor to the Chair and the Chair to become Past-Chair at end of term of office
- The executive shall have a maximum of three (3) Advisors who are available for consultation on OBC business but do not have voting power.

### Duties of executive:

Strategic planning, engage in partnership with health care providers / organizations, consumers, interest groups, supervision of OBC goals, administration of OBC operations

- An annual general meeting will be held in April of each year, funding dependent.
- Annual elections of Chair, Chair - elect, and Chairs of subcommittees to be held at Annual General Meeting in April of each year.
- OBC's business year to run May 1 to April 30.
- The Chair to revisit organizational structure on yearly basis to determine if structure is effective in carrying out the mission of the organization.
- Sub-committee structure and duties may change to meet mission of committee
- Executive shall meet at least six (6) times per year with meeting structure to be in person, teleconference, or other electronic means depending on funding
- The Chair of the Communication & Public Relations subcommittee will take minutes of the executive meetings and correspond to executive by email. Corrections will be noted and approval of minutes sought at next meeting.
- Subcommittees shall meet a minimum of four (4) times per year either in-person, teleconference or other electronic means depending on funding available.
- Minutes of sub-committees meetings will be recorded and a copy sent to Chair of Communication & Public Relations for filing and made available to executive.

These terms of reference reflect the decisions made during the first year of operation, that is the year of 2001 - 2002

# Ontario Breastfeeding Committee Executive

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## Ontario Breastfeeding Committee Membership Form

<b>Name:</b>					
<b>Affiliation:</b>					
<b>Address:</b>					
<b>Tel:</b>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>				
<b>Fax:</b>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>				
<b>E-mail:</b>					

Please indicate the following:

- I am interested in the work of the following sub-committee:

<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATION/PUBLIC RELATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> FUNDING DEVELOPMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION & RESEARCH
<input type="checkbox"/> POLICY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICAL ACTION	

- I prefer a general member membership at this time.

Signed: .....

Date: .....