



Breastfeeding Committee for Canada

National Authority for the WHO/UNICEF
Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in Canada

Annual General Meeting
June 15, 2010

Annual Report

Background

The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada is a registered not for profit organization dedicated to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding as the normal method of infant feeding and the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Initiative in Canada.

The BCC is a volunteer organization that does not have any public or private funding. The Board extends their sincere appreciation to all our volunteers for their devotion to moving breastfeeding best practice forward in Canada.

Structure

There are 2 standing committees that work hand in hand:

- The BCC P/T BFI Implementation Committee has representatives from each Province and Territory, building capacity and sharing experiences in the implementation of best practice
- The BCC BFI Assessment Committee is composed of Lead Assessors, and works to build capacity across the P/Ts to assist and assess facilities engaged in the BFI journey.

Ad hoc Committee: The BCC Nutrition Committee has been developing a document and clinical practice guidelines to protect, promote and support sustained breastfeeding after the introduction of complementary foods.

Please see the BCC Committee Annual Reports for more information on their work.

Meetings

The BCC Board has met ten times by teleconference since the February 2009 BCC Annual General meeting. The BCC would like to express their appreciation to the Public Health Agency of Canada for supporting the calls for the BCC Board and Committee meetings during 2009 and until the end of March 2010.

Structure of the BCC board: Following enquiry and discussions at the P/T committee, the BCC Board discussed how the function and structure of the incoming Board might address transparency and accountability- key issues in the transformation of the structure of the voting membership and the BCC. The bylaws allow for flexibility on the number of directors. It was decided that the Board would move towards an “executive” function, and be composed of the co-chairs of the BCC, the chairs of the standing committees (Assessment and P/T), and a Treasurer/ Secretary.

Activities

The main focus of the BCC work this past year has been collaboration between the committees to ensure a sustainable, inclusive system for the implementation and assessment of the BFI at the P/T level. The Committee Reports will highlight the capacity building and resource development that is ongoing. The BCC Coordinator, Marilyn Sanders resigned in March 2009, and the Board thanked her for many years of dedicated service. The BCC currently has no paid staff support. The website continues to be the main interface of the BCC with those seeking information about the BFI in Canada. From June 2009 to date, there were 46,620 hits, with the average visit lasting 62 minutes. The most popular downloads are the BCC BFI Outcomes indicators and BFI documents. The Top 10 countries visiting our website are Canada, USA, Netherlands, Spain, China, Romania, Germany and France. Sincere thanks are extended to the past web administrator, Jason DiMichelle, for ongoing volunteer assistance. Two issues of *Breastfeeding Canada*, the BCC Newsletter, were produced in March and November 2009.

The BCC thanks the **Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)** for supporting teleconference meetings of the Board and Committees for 2009 and until the end of March 2010. Dr. Butler Jones, in the Chief Public Health Officer's Report on The State of Public Health in Canada 2009, noted the low rate of exclusive breastfeeding to six months (Chapter 4). The BFI is an initiative that will assist in increasing the exclusive breastfeeding rate at six months from 14% to meet the Health Canada recommendations that babies are breastfed exclusively from birth to six months. PHAC contracted the BCC to write a report marking the 10th anniversary of the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Initiative in Canada. The report will be posted on the BCC website in the near future. The BCC was pleased to participate in the review PHAC's *Bedsharing: A Systematic Literature and Policy Review*. Information and resources regarding safe sleeping continue to be a topic of high interest at the P/T level.

The **Canadian Pediatric Society Nutrition Committee** recognizes the importance of breastfeeding and has several initiatives underway to communicate key messages to paediatricians across Canada. The CPS Statement, *Promoting Optimal Monitoring of Child Growth in Canada: Using the new WHO growth charts*, marks the updating of the recommendations on growth monitoring by the CPS, Dietitians of Canada, The college of Family Physicians of Canada and Community Health Nurses of Canada. These new growth standards were publicised through the BCC P/T BFI Implementation Committee. The BCC is represented at the CPS Nutrition Committee meetings by Genevieve Courant, BCC Director, member of the Nutrition Committee, and former member of the Health Canada Expert Group examining exclusive breastfeeding to 6 months.

UNICEF Canada continues to commend facilities that attain BFI designation, attending award ceremonies where possible. This is an honour greatly appreciated by the facilities. The BCC provided input regarding World Breastfeeding Week awareness materials for the UNICEF Canada website, and looks forward to collaborating in the planning of 2011 conference to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the launch of the BFHI.

The BCC made a submission to the 2005 Commission reviewing **Federal Labour Standards** in Canada, proposing legislation of paid breastfeeding breaks in the Revised Canadian Labour Code. As a contributor to the Commission's Report, the BCC was invited in May 2009 to make a submission to the review of recommendations in this report. Johanna Bergerman, Chair of the BCC Nutrition Committee, took the lead again in authoring this submission.

The **WABA Complementary Feeding Workshop** for the Global Breastfeeding partners meeting held in Penang, Malaysia, on Oct 8-9th 2009 was attended by BCC Infant Nutrition Ad Hoc Committee Chair, Johanna Bergerman, as an ILCA/WABA fellow, where she had the opportunity to work with leading

international experts on developing indicators for sustained breastfeeding. Participants developed a WABA consensus statement: *Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding from 6 – 24 + months: Issues, Politics, Policies and Action*.

The **WHO/UNICEF forum for Coordinators of the BFHI in Industrialized Countries** will meet in October 2010 in Italy. These meetings are arranged approximately every two years, under the auspices of WHO International, and provide a forum for the exchange of strategies to maintain high standards. Canada has attended these meetings since 2001. Currently three BCC BFI Assessment Committee members are serving on the WHO BFHI Technical Working Group. The BFHI, as a key component of the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, is as important in the industrialized world as in less resourced countries in the developing world.

Membership of the BCC

Membership is open to Canadians interested in voluntarily furthering the objects of the BCC, who is in no way associated with a company whose products fall within the scope of The WHO Code, and whose application has been approved by the Board. BCC membership categories and fees are described in the BCC Bylaws.

Voting Members (Board Directors and members of the standing committees) and **Associate Members** (individuals interested in furthering the aims of the BCC who have received approval of the Board of Directors) pay the annual membership fee.

Associate memberships declined since the last AGM, due to the fact that no reminders were sent. The BCC greatly appreciates the support of professional organizations and Provincial BFI Committees who encourage their members to also support the BCC.

Membership fees (\$30) are now due annually by the end of March, to simplify sending reminders. These fees support BCC expenses such as teleconference meetings of the BCC Board and Committees, participation of the BCC representative to the Canadian Pediatric Society Nutrition Committee, and participation of the BCC delegates to the WHO Coordinators for the BFI in Industrialized Countries.

Associate Membership forms are available at <http://www.breastfeedingcanada.ca/html/support.html>

Financial sustainability

The BCC currently has approximately \$49,000 net assets, despite disbursements exceeding income in the past year. Sustainability is a key issue for the BCC. Treasurer Emmy Maten, was joined by co-treasurer Ginette Belanger, and the BCC thanks them for ensuring compliance with Federal, Ontario and Quebec tax laws, and for safeguarding the BCC nest egg to ensure our financial wellbeing. Emmy and Ginette will be greatly missed as co-treasurers.

Board of Directors:

Co-chairs: Marianne Brophy & Kathy Venter

P/T BFI Implementation Standing Committee Co-chairs: Kathy Inkpen & Claudette Landry

BFI Assessment Standing Committee Chair: Marina Green

Nutrition Ad Hoc Committee Chair: Johanna Bergerman

Co-treasurer: Ginette Belanger

CPS Nutrition Committee Representative: Genevieve Courant

Directors: Louise Dumas, Michelle LeDrew

Respectfully submitted by Marianne Brophy and Kathy Venter
BCC Co-Chairs

