



The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada
The National Authority for the WHO/UNICEF
Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative in Canada

Annual Report February 2008-9

The year 2008-9 has seen consolidation of the evolutionary changes to the structure and function of the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada (BCC), building on the work of all the members in preceding years. We have continued the dialogue with national stakeholders begun during the transformation process, expanding the Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) Implementation and Assessment at the National and Provincial and Territorial (P/T) level.

The BCC is pleased to support the *Breastfeeding: The Smart Choice, Stepping up to Baby-Friendly national conference*, sponsored by the BC Ministry of Active Living and Sport and the BC Perinatal Health Program. Marianne Brophy, Kathy Venter, Marina Green and Kathy Inkpen served on the organizing committee of this conference that celebrates the tenth anniversary of the launch of the BFI in Canada (1998-2008). The BCC has scheduled the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and several committee meetings to coincide with the conference, and would like to thank the sponsors for the use of the conference facilities outside of the conference schedule. We are pleased that every Province and territory is represented at the first AGM since the BCC governance was transformed. We welcome the opportunity for informal discussions with PHAC Acting Director Kelly Stone, and staff members Marie LeBreche and Jennifer Anderson who are attending the conference.

As the **Public Health Agency of Canada** (PHAC) point of contact for the BCC, Jennifer Anderson is both proactive and innovative. PHAC has facilitated the regular and effective communication of the BCC Board and Committees by allowing us access to their teleconference service. As a volunteer organization with no central office, we look forward to sharing a Public Health Portal and building a data base to secure our corporate memory. Revision of the *10 Valuable Tips for Successful Breastfeeding* and the *10 Great Reasons to Breastfeed* has been completed. The BCC has been contracted by PHAC to research and write a tenth anniversary report on the implementation of the BFI in Canada. The report will provide both an historical overview and an examination of the future direction of the BFI, the BCC as the national BFI authority and the role of the federal government. While there is still no possibility of core funding for the BCC from the federal government, we greatly appreciate the concrete support and ongoing communication with the PHAC.

Some BCC highlights in 2008-9:

Baby-Friendly Implementation

The BCC Provincial and Territorial Baby Friendly Implementation Committee, provides a vibrant forum for representatives from P/T BFI Committees/ Coalitions and P/T Ministries of Health to share strategies and resources. At the P/T level, capacity to implement the BFI has

been considerably enhanced by the increasing number of Provincial Governments endorsing, supporting and funding the BFI as an evidence-based strategy to establish and sustain best practice. Special thanks to committee chairs, Kathy Inkpen and Claudette Landry, for helping to ensure that each and every province and territory is represented at the AGM and BFI 10th anniversary conference. The dedication and enthusiasm of this committee has been instrumental in the growing interest in BFI implementation across Canada.

Baby-Friendly Designation and Monitoring

Since the last BCC AGM on April 24, 2008, the number of BFI designated facilities in Canada has increased from 18 to 26. This includes 10 hospitals, 2 birthing centres and 14 community health services. **The BFI Assessment Committee**, under the leadership of Marina Green, continues to lead and support assessment teams and health facilities across Canada. Work on the revision of the integrated Practice Outcomes Indicators reflecting the continuum of care across hospital and community health services continues. This is a herculean task that, in addition, requires the updating of all the assessment documents. Once completed, these documents will also reflect the UNICEF 2006 updates. The BFI Assessment Committee has worked closely with the P/T BFI Implementation committee to share information and build BFI assessment knowledge at the P/T level.

At the international level, the BCC participated in the **WHO/ UNICEF Meeting for BFHI Coordinators in Industrialized Countries** in June 2008 at WHO International headquarters in Geneva. Three members of the BFI Assessment Committee are actively involved in this Coordinators forum. Marianne Brophy served on the meeting planning committee, and Marina Green and Louise Dumas attended the meeting, and serve on the technical working group. This network is a useful resource for countries who do not receive any UNICEF funding for the implementation of the BFHI, and provides a forum for sharing strategies to overcome challenges and ensure the sustainability of the BFHI and monitoring of the WHO Code as a key components of the WHO/ UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. The meeting discussions and documents guide ongoing updates and changes to BFI implementation and assessment internationally.

Optimizing Exclusive and Sustained Breastfeeding

Despite clear recommendations from Health Canada regarding exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and sustained nursing after the introduction of complementary foods, national data indicate that these important health indicators are not yet met across Canada. The Nutrition Committee continues to work on guidelines and clinical standards for complementary feeding. Johanna Bergerman, chair of this committee, was able to share some of this work during her three month fellowship at WABA in Penang, Malaysia. We would like to thank Johanna and her committee for their unfailing commitment.

Communication

Another BCC **newsletter** was published on our website, thanks to BCC Co-chair Kathy Venter. The newsletter is a popular vehicle for sharing provincial and territorial BFI updates. The BCC **website** is an important public interface, and webmaster Jason DiMichele reports that there were 273,330 hits since the last AGM. This translates to approximately 30,370 hits per month, up from 22,133 per month, a 25% increase in traffic. This can be seen as a barometer of interest in

the work of the BCC and the BFI in Canada. We are grateful to our webmaster for maintaining our presence in cyberspace.

As the Executive Assistant to the BCC Board, Marilyn Sanders is the only part-time, paid staff person. She provides excellent support, detailed editing, and meticulous Board meeting minutes. BFI designated facilities receive their awards in time for their celebrations, and BCC members are informed and reminded to pay their dues. Thank you, Marilyn.

Collaboration

The **Canadian Pediatric Society Nutrition Committee** recognizes the importance of breastfeeding and has several initiatives underway to communicate key messages to pediatricians across Canada. 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. We extend our thanks to Genevieve for attending these important meetings.

The BCC is pleased to **endorse the grant application** of Dr. Nicole Letourneau, Canada Research Chair in Healthy Child Development in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of New Brunswick, to the Major Collaborative Research Initiatives Program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The research will examine the social determinants of early child development with a focus on surveillance and intervention. We wish Nicole and her team every success with this application and look forward to supporting the research.

The **WABA 3rd International Global Forum** planning continues, and the BCC thanks Louise Dumas for reporting on these discussions.

BCC Finances

Treasurer extraordinaire, Emmy Maten, has ensured BCC compliance with federal, Ontario and Quebec tax laws. In her 5 years in this demanding volunteer role, Emmy has nurtured the BCC nest egg to ensure our financial wellbeing. Co-signatory to the BCC bank account, Ginette Belanger will join Emmy as co-treasurer, and after a year-long handover period, Emmy will complete her service as BCC Treasurer. The BCC greatly appreciates Emmy's dedication and foresight, and would also like to thank our volunteer auditor, Tony Spenseri.

BCC Governance Transition

At the last AGM the Voting Members sanctioned the new governance structure of the BCC. During this year of consolidation, members of the standing committees (P/T BFI Implementation Committee and BFI Assessment Committee) have grown into their role as the current Voting Members. The Bylaws have been revised to formalize the governance structure, and will be brought forward for approval at the 2009 AGM.

In the 2009-10 year, the BCC will invite representatives from key professional bodies to serve as Expert Advisory Members, ensuring the continuing dialogue between these organizations and the BCC. We look forward to continued liaison and discussion with PHAC and the federal government to position the BFI as an evidence-based strategy to achieve the key health indicators of exclusive breastfeeding to about six months with sustained breastfeeding after the

introduction of complementary table foods. Through capacity building and P/T level commitment, the sustainability of the BFI in Canada will be assured.

Appreciation

The BCC Co-Chairs sincerely thank the BCC Board and Committee members for their tireless work in moving the BFI forward in Canada. The BCC would like to thank PHAC for the support we receive for our volunteers. Excellent point of contact staff who facilitate teleconferencing, data portals and continuing discussions and exchanges greatly enhance the capacity of our organization. We would like to thank the BC Government and BC Perinatal Health Program for sponsoring the BFI 10th Anniversary conference in Vancouver, where the initiative was originally launched. We celebrate that fact that most of the Provinces and Territories are actively engaged in implementing the BFI, and thank the P/T governments for the support of their BFI Coalitions/Committees.

International research demonstrates that the BFI is an affordable, effective, continuous quality improvement health promotion, and injury and chronic disease prevention strategy with direct relevance in Canada. The BCC is pleased to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Brophy & Kathy Venter
BCC Co-Chairs

Date	Hits	Files accessed	MB downloaded
April 24 - April 30, 2008	5942	3580	145
May	27670	18424	755
Jun	25693	18069	719
Jul	26066	19291	601
Aug	22061	16001	531
Sept	29154	21171	656
Oct	34859	24557	886
Nov	34244	24110	886
Dec	25682	17808	641
Jan 2009	32059	22236	745
Feb 1 - 10	9900	6606	196
	273,330	191,853	6,761