

Wood County's Comprehensive Lactation Care System

At the Wood County Health Department we are working to change breastfeeding practices as a system wide effort. In Wood County we see numerous gaps in breastfeeding services and organizations working in silos to provide services. We convened a group of hospital management, clinic management, providers, public health, and WIC to discuss current practices and how we can move forward as a collaborative system. We found that only public health and WIC were providing prenatal education on breastfeeding. Due to lack of time with the doctor at a prenatal appointment, the doctor's suggested having one of the hospital IBCLC's onsite to do prenatal breastfeeding education while pregnant mothers are waiting for at their glucose screening appointment. We also found that the some weeks the hospital only had 1-2 days of lactation services. Finally, we found that the hospitals and clinics did not have a good understanding of the services that public health and WIC provide.

Many changes are being made in the prenatal period to collaborate and bridge gaps in services. Prenatal education is being streamlined, utilizing the Coffective materials, to provide consistent prenatal breastfeeding education. Currently, breastfeeding education is being provided at the initial pregnancy appointment, and we are implementing the change of having a hospital IBCLC at the clinic 2 days a week, during prenatal glucose screening appointments, to provider further breastfeeding education. We are also working on implementing more prenatal education that can be done with the medical assistance prior to meeting with the doctor. The WIC program provides prenatal education at all of the pregnancy appointments. All of the WIC Registered Dietitians, at the Wood County WIC program, are certified in lactation. Public health is also an option for providers to refer a patient to receive prenatal breastfeeding education.

Many changes have also been made in the postpartum period to ensure continuity of care after discharge. When a mom delivers in the hospital she receives lactation support by hospital nurses and lactation consultants. The birthing center and/or providers also have the option of contacting public health or WIC to provide these services in hospital if the hospital is short staffed. Before the patient leaves the hospital they are scheduled for an appointment with their provider at 5-7 days postpartum and with a lactation consultant within 2 days after discharge. We've collaborated services so that the lactation appointment can either be made with the hospital or public health. For WIC participants, a WIC Discharge Form is filled out and WIC will follow-up with lactation services. Medical providers have also been provided training on available lactation services and can refer a patient to the hospital, public health, or WIC for lactation services.

A gap in services that can lead to discontinued breastfeeding prior to one month is the lack of follow-up after the first week. However, we do not see this with the WIC population, due to the breastfeeding peer counseling program. Public health has implemented services that mimic the WIC breastfeeding peer counseling program. All non-WIC moms, indicated as breastfeeding at discharge, are contacted at one month, three months, and six months. We still saw a gap in services between the first week of lactation follow-up and the first month contact from public health. We have begun to bridge this gap by developing a referral process to public health for continued lactation follow-up. Hospital lactation

consultants or providers are referring breastfeeding patients to public health and WIC once lactation care is ceased by them.

We also looked at other factors that play a role in a mother's breastfeeding journey. Medications are often a barrier for continued success with breastfeeding. We have included our pharmacies into this system of care and have implemented a referral process with them. We provided them with breastfeeding resource tear-off pads, so that the pharmacist can refer patients to lactation consultants for more information on how to maintain a milk supply while taking medications. A sign has been placed in pharmacy waiting areas to prompt a breastfeeding mom to tell her pharmacist that she is breastfeeding.

Our goal is to provide a comprehensive system of lactation care from the prenatal period throughout a mother's breastfeeding journey. We have created partnerships and collaborated services to make this possible. We are in the early stages of this process and will continue to look at different aspects of the system to ensure adequate lactation services are provided and bridge any gaps that are identified.

