



Going “Baby-Friendly” with COPE Health Solutions

A Case Study: St. Francis Medical Center

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ST. FRANCIS
MEDICAL CENTER

The Problem

California law (Health and Safety Code Section 123367) requires all hospitals providing perinatal services to implement a maternity-focused program in line with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund's (UNICEF) “Ten Steps to Effective Breastfeeding”¹ through the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) or a comparable process by January 1, 2025.² Currently, less than one in five qualifying hospitals in California meet this requirement.

The BFHI aims to improve maternity care by emphasizing the benefits of breastfeeding for child development and by promoting mother/baby bonding experiences.³ In addition to audits on breastfeeding techniques and mother-baby interaction, the designation method required by Baby-Friendly USA (BFUSA) involves a prescriptive regimen of staff and patient education.

Through a \$500,000 grant provided by First 5 LA, St. Francis Medical Center (SFMC) in Lynwood began its Baby-Friendly journey in October 2011. The hospital was faced with the task of launching the project, building the communication strategy and auditing the entire hospital staff and perinatal patient population. The hospital manager tasked with implementing this program, recognized that constraints and workload volumes would be a barrier to successful implementation and compliance with the staffing

¹ World Health Organization, *The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breast-feeding: The Special Role of Maternity Services* (Geneva, 1989).

² California Senate. *An act to add Section 123367 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to public Health*. SB 402. Sacramento, 2013).

³ Benefits to a hospital from the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative go beyond legal viability: The health benefits to patients of breastfeeding and mother-baby interaction have been widely accepted and researched, and the international health community has affirmed these benefits in a number of articles and declarations. Some of the commonly stated benefits of breastfeeding include infants receiving the complete mix of antibodies, nutrients and water necessary for the first six months of life. Also, breastfeeding supports the mother, by promoting a more rapid recovery from delivery while decreasing the risk of ovarian and breast cancer. Both mother and child benefit from immediate post-partum breastfeeding by decreasing the risk of desertion. See UNICEF, *1990-2005 Celebrating the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding: Past Achievements, Present Challenges and the Way Forward for Infant and Young Child Feeding* (Florence, 2005), 2-3.

constraints and workload volumes would be a barrier to successful implementation and compliance with the law. Due to limited resources, she was the only full time employee designated by SFMC to implement the BFHI project, along with intermittent support from two part-time hospital employees.

The Solution

SFMC has been home to the COPE Health Scholars Programs⁴ since October 2009, a partnership which provides over 425 students to support the hospital's clinical and administrative workforce. The hospital leveraged this resource to supply the extra hands needed to drive the project forward.

BFHI uses the “4-D Pathway” implementation model for hospital accreditation. D1 – **Discovery** includes establishing executive support and completing a self-assessment. At SFMC, D2 – **Development** was challenged from the onset due to the lack of a necessary task force for the initiative – the hospital could only provide one employee. This stage also requires the curriculum and materials for hospital-wide trainings to be developed. D3 – **Dissemination** requires educating and training the entire nursing staff and patient population.

A partnership between SFMC's BFHI and the COPE Health Scholar programs was the best-fit solution for an initiative faced with personnel needs. A team of eight Health Scholars and two Licensed Nurse Scholars was assembled in order to complete the extensive amount of auditing required – a crucial element for the success of the Dissemination and Development phases. The team then received a four-hour training on the Baby Friendly process from the hospital manager. Post training, each Health Scholar provided four hours of assistance per week while the Licensed Nurse Scholar provided 12 hours of assistance per week.

In addition to completing audits, Health Scholars and Licensed Nurse Scholars also assisted with the creation of educational materials for staff and patients. The leadership and organized structure of the Health Scholar and Licensed Nurse Scholar programs gave the BFHI at SFMC operational support, which enabled the BFHI to progress at an accelerated pace.

⁴ Health Scholars are students interested in healthcare professions who assist in hands-on patient care. Licensed Nurse Scholars are registered nurse students who also assist in patient comfort-care while receiving professional mentoring.

Outcomes

The use of Health Scholars and Licensed Nurse Scholars facilitated the hospital in achieving its goal as follows:

- From December 2012 to December 2013, the Health Scholars and Licensed Nurse Scholars of SFMC completed 100% of audits required for the D3 phase of the BFHI.
- Over the last 26 months, the Health Scholar and Licensed Nurse Scholars program provided the BFHI at SFMC with 1851 hours of support.
- The leadership of the Health Scholars assisted in the development of over 10 educational documents to be used in staff and patient education. Examples include postpartum staff booklets and breastfeeding charts to be placed in new mother patient rooms.

SFMC is currently in phase D4 – **Designation**, expecting to receive auditors from the organization in September 2014. In three years' time, with only one full-time staff member allocated, SFMC now looks forward to achieving a coveted designation, making it legally viable as a perinatal facility in the future. Furthermore, SFMC will be the first institution to do so using the resources of the Health Scholar and Licensed Nurse Scholar programs, effectively leveraging the programs to improve the implementation efficiency of a hospital-wide initiative.

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