

Supporting Breastfeeding

How Confluence Health is Creating the Healthiest Next Generation



The Healthiest Next Generation Initiative

The goal of the Healthiest Next Generation Initiative is to help all children maintain a healthy weight, enjoy active lives and eat well by creating healthy early learning settings, schools and communities.

Join partner organizations, the Departments of Health and Early Learning and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in elevating local success statewide.

This story is an example of what one hospital is doing to create the healthiest next generation in Washington.

QUICK FACTS

Confluence Health:

75,000+ outpatient visits/year
39,800+ acute patient days (2014)
7,100+ Transitional Care Unit patient days (2014)

Legislative District: 12

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Opportunity

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends infants be exclusively breastfed for six months. Without hospital support, about one in three mothers stop breastfeeding early.¹ Babies who aren't breastfed are at greater risk for infections, SIDS, chronic conditions and having an unhealthy weight.

Four years ago when Michelle Murphy, RN, Childbirth Educator for Confluence Health: Central Washington Hospital began working towards becoming an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, she never imagined leading the charge to change practices in the hospital's mother/baby unit to better support breastfeeding.

Action

Murphy shared her new knowledge with Barb Lawson, RN, BSN, Director of Mother/Baby & Pediatrics, Connie Morris, RNC, BSN, Clinical Manager, Mother/Baby & Pediatrics and the hospital's lactation team. She found them receptive to changes. Together, they reviewed the [Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding](#) developed by the World Health Organization to see what they could do.

Staff focused on placing babies skin-to-skin with their moms in the first hour of birth to increase breastfeeding. They call this the "Golden Hour," and everyone protects this precious time. Next, they offered a two-day breastfeeding training for all unit staff, clinic nursing staff, a midwife, plus invited Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program staff and home-health nurses. Over 150 people attended. The hospital covered the cost of the training, a capital budget item. "It's huge that everyone is operating with the same knowledge base," said Lawson.

Impact

"Moms tell us the difference has been day and night," said Morris. And they're not done. Up next: revising the existing policy for breastfeeding, increasing lactation staffing hours from eight to 12 [each day], introducing a new lactation section in the medical record, educating physicians, translating education materials into Spanish and exploring the creation of a breast milk depot. "I would have never guessed five years ago that we would be where we are now," said Murphy.

To support their and other hospitals' efforts the Department of Health and the Washington State Hospital Association are teaming up to launch Breastfeeding Friendly Washington - Hospitals. This is a voluntary program recognizing the important role hospitals play in supporting breastfeeding. To learn more, visit: www.doh.wa.gov/BFWA/hospitals

Supporting breastfeeding is part of the Healthiest Next Generation Initiative. To learn more about the Healthiest Next Generation Initiative, visit: www.doh.wa.gov/healthiestnextgen or join us at hashtag [#HealthiestNextGen](https://twitter.com/HealthiestNextGen)

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Hospital Support for Breastfeeding: Preventing obesity begins in hospitals," CDC Vital Signs, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, August 2011, <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/breastfeeding/> accessed on June 5, 2015.