



North Carolina Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation

Introduction

The NC Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation (NC MCBFD) initiative has been developed to recognize maternity centers that have taken steps to promote, protect and support breastfeeding in their organization. A five star system has been developed wherein one star is awarded for every two steps achieved in the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO). Baby-Friendly USA (BFUSA) is the national authority for the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative in the United States. They designate facilities that have successfully implemented all Ten Steps. The North Carolina initiative encourages maternity centers across the state to promote and support breastfeeding one step at a time, and acknowledges commitment and progress. **Note:** Facilities who have achieved Baby-Friendly Designation from BFUSA may submit an expedited application to receive a five star NC Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation.

The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding are as follows:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement the policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation, even if they should be separated from their infants.
6. Give newborns no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice “rooming-in” – allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours per day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers (also called bottle nipples) to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

Each of the Baby Friendly Ten Steps is described in the application. Following each description are related questions. Many require documentation to support the answer. Options and/or examples are often given to assist you in providing satisfactory documentation.

NC MCBFD, although based on the WHO Baby-Friendly Ten Steps, is different in that:

- There are no fees attached;
- Recognition is awarded incrementally (for every 2 steps attained) to help support a continuum of improvement;
- It is a local program, promoting healthy competition in NC;
- There are no site visits required.

Benefits

The benefits of participating in this voluntary program include:

- Improving the health of the mother-baby dyad;
- Increasing patient satisfaction with maternity care services in your facility;
- Building momentum in your facility to move across the continuum towards being breastfeeding-friendly;
- Public recognition of your efforts toward becoming breastfeeding-friendly;
- Free marketing to the public about your efforts;
- Helping to improve breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity in North Carolina;

For information on how to participate in this program, see [Application Instructions](#).

