HE- 65-1



REPORT **General Committee**

For Information

DATE:

August 17, 2009

REPORT TITLE: THE BREASTFEEDING COMMITTEE FOR CANADA AWARDS BABY FRIENDLY DESIGNATION TO PEEL PUBLIC HEALTH

FROM:

Janette Smith. Commissioner of Health Services

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OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to inform Regional Council that in June 2009, representatives from the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) awarded Peel Public Health the prestigious Baby Friendly Designation.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Peel Public Health received the Baby Friendly Designation in June 2009.
- The Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) is a global strategy led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) designed to increase maternal and infant health by improving breastfeeding outcomes for mothers and their babies.
- Peel Public Health, with its more than 16,500 births per year, is the largest community health service in Canada to achieve this designation.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

In an effort to optimize breastfeeding rates, Peel Public Health engaged in a process to meet the criteria that would allow it to receive the Baby Friendly Designation. The Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) is a WHO/UNICEF global strategy designed to increase maternal and infant health by improving breastfeeding outcomes for mothers and their babies. The improvement in breastfeeding rates will elevate the health status of Peel families thereby decreasing the burden on the health system. Specifically, in the short term, a reduction in various childhood infections requiring treatment can be realized and in the long term, coupled with other strategies, a reduction in obesity.

It is an important designation as it identifies Peel Public Health as an organization which ensures a high standard of consistent care and customer service, provides a welcoming and respectful environment for mothers to breastfeed, and supports and guides the practice of Peel Public Health staff. The designation further reinforces Peel Public Health as an influential and credible source for breastfeeding expertise when collaborating with community partners. It also recognizes work being done to help our entire community

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including others in the health care system become supportive of breastfeeding mothers. It is about changing the cultural norm.

The Baby Friendly Designation is based on research. Its evidence based, best practice approach is designed to protect and promote breastfeeding by supporting and empowering parents to make informed decisions regarding infant feeding. This initiative is supportive of all families regardless of infant feeding decisions.

In order to receive the Baby Friendly Designation, community health agencies must meet specific criteria as stipulated in the BFI Seven Point Plan (Appendix I) and the WHO Code for the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (Appendix II).

Assessment Process

In June 2009, five representatives from the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC), the national authority for WHO/UNICEF in Canada, conducted a three day assessment of Peel Public Health breastfeeding practices. The assessment included interviews with the Medical Officer of Health and Family Health Division staff at all levels including management, frontline and administrative support staff. In addition, the assessors visited several key breastfeeding service locations where they interviewed clients, including pregnant women and mothers who had recently received our breastfeeding services. Prior to the onsite assessment, there was a thorough review of policies, protocols and educational curricula to evaluate Peel Public Health breastfeeding practices. Following the assessment, the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada awarded Peel Public Health the Baby Friendly Designation.

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CONCLUSION

Peel Public Health is very proud to have achieved this important designation as we continue to aspire to excellence in practice. Throughout this five year project, staff has maintained passion and dedication in pursuit of this goal. Peel Public Health has the highest birth rate of any community health service in Canada to receive this designation with over 16,500 births per year. This designation is valid for five (5) years at which time we will participate in the reassessment process. This achievement ack nowledges Peel Public Health's continued leadership in utilizing the best available evidence and best practices to promote breastfeeding.

Janette Smith
Commissioner of Health Services

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Approved for Submission:

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The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada has developed this Seven Point Plan in order to achieve Baby Friendly Designation in Community Health Settings. This Seven Point Plan stipulates Community agencies must:

- 1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all staff and volunteers:
- 2. Train all health care providers in the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the breastfeeding policy;
- 3. Inform pregnant women and their families about the benefits and management of breastfeeding:
- 4. Support mothers to establish and maintain exclusive breastfeeding to six months;
- 5. Encourage sustained breastfeeding beyond six months with appropriate introduction of complementary foods;
- 6. Provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families; and
- 7. Promote collaboration between health care providers, breastfeeding support groups and local community.

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Peel Public Health is also committed to comply with the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk substitutes (formula) and subsequent relevant WHO resolutions which stipulate:

- 1. No advertising of products under the scope of the Code to the public;
- 2. No free samples to mothers;
- 3. No promotion of products in health care facilities, including the distribution of free or low-cost supplies;
- 4. No company representatives to advise mothers;
- 5. No gifts or personal samples to health workers;
- 6. No words or pictures idealizing artificial feeding, including pictures of infants on product labels:
- 7. Information to health workers should be scientific and factual:
- 8. All information on artificial feeding, including the labels, should explain the benefits of breastfeeding and costs and hazards associated with artificial feeding;
- 9. Unsuitable products such as sweetened condensed milk should not be promoted for babies; and
- 10. Products should be of a high quality and take account of the climatic and storage conditions of the country where they are used.