



Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program



The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada
The National Authority for the WHO/UNICEF
Baby-Friendly™ Hospital Initiative in Canada

Final Report on the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program Partnership Plan Of Action “Giving Birth to the Future” 1998-2000

Introduction

In the spring of 1998, the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) received a grant from Health Canada to begin work on developing a partnership with the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP). Ten members of the BCC (including the members of the BCC Executive Committee) and ten representatives of CPNP (representing Health Canada regional and national offices and CPNP projects) met in April 1998 to explore the possibility of developing a plan of action for a partnership that would address their mutual commitment to breastfeeding as a strategy for improving and enhancing the health of childbearing women and their children in Canada. A three-year Plan of Action for the years 1998-2000 was developed. Working groups composed of representatives of the BCC and CPNP were established to address each of the Joint Goals identified in the Plan of Action. The following is the final report on this project.

The BCC and CPNP have been successful in meeting many of the objectives identified in the Partnership Plan of Action (1998-2000). Collaboration continues between the two organizations and this report also includes information on other outcomes and continuing activities.

JOINT GOALS

The BCC/CPNP Partnership Plan of Action (1998-2000) identified three Joint Goals.

Goal One: Strengthen the BCC and CPNP partnership to address the joint commitment to breastfeeding as a strategy for improving the health of infants, children and women in Canada.

Action 1: Use CPNP presence at the BFI launch as another opportunity for partnership contact.

Action 2: Develop a joint vision for the BCC and CPNP Partnership.

Action 3: Meet to review action plan progress and solidify the partnership.

Action 4: The BCC will invite the CPNP to be an official member of the BCC.

Representatives of CPNP from all levels (national, provincial and local projects) attended the BCC's Conference and Official Launch of the Baby-Friendly™ Initiative in Canada "Breastfeeding: Stepping into the Baby-Friendly Initiative" held in Vancouver, BC in November, 1998. About 100 representatives of the BCC and CPNP attended a reception in honour of National Child Day, organized by Judy Watson, Senior Program Consultant, CPNP from Health Canada. Those attending gathered in provincial/territorial groups for informal networking on the challenges surrounding the promotion of breastfeeding in Canada.

The CPNP delegates to the 1998 meeting continue to communicate through e-mail, conference calls and information mailouts to share current breastfeeding information/research, respond to breastfeeding issues within CPNP projects and review breastfeeding documents. This group, called the CPNP Breastfeeding Working Group, in consultation with the wider CPNP community and the BCC, developed a joint vision statement which was published in the Winter, 2000 (Vol. 4 #1) issue of *Breastfeeding Canada*, the newsletter of the BCC.

The Joint Vision Statement

Canadian communities will foster environments where breastfeeding is the easiest choice for all women and their children.

A meeting to review action plan progress and solidify the partnership was not held between April, 1998 and December, 2000. While both BCC and CPNP would have welcomed such a meeting, no funding source was identified to support the costs of another meeting.

At its 1998 meeting in Vancouver the BCC agreed to extend voting membership to CPNP. Janet Murphy-Goodridge of St. John's NF, was named by the CPNP partnership, to represent CPNP on the BCC.

In the spring of 1999 Janet also became a member of the BCC Board of Directors, a position she continues to hold. Janet coordinated the development of the BCC/CPNP joint vision statement and has been instrumental in many of the other accomplishments of the Plan of Action. Her work has been and is greatly appreciated by both CPNP and BCC.

Goal Two: Develop ongoing communication mechanisms between the BCC and the CPNP to assist each other to reach the joint vision.

Action 1: Develop networking opportunities between the BCC and CPNP.

Action 2: Report on BCC/CPNP partnership development at monthly conference calls of CPNP leaders across country.

Action 3: Provide a short story or a profile of a CPNP project for each BCC newsletter.

Action 4: Distribute the BCC newsletter "Breastfeeding Canada" and the Health Canada breastfeeding logo to all CPNP sites.

Action 5: Distribute "CPNP Four Years Old and Thriving", CPNP "Reaching Canadian Communities" and CPNP postcards to all BCC members.

Action 6: Prepare a brief report on the partnership meeting for use by both organizations and which is published in the fourth issue of the BCC newsletter "Breastfeeding Canada".

Action 7: Prepare a press release announcing the partnership for the conference "Breastfeeding: Stepping into the Baby-Friendly Initiative" in Vancouver, British Columbia in November, 1998.

The list of BCC members was provided to CPNP National office in Ottawa following the partnership meeting in April, 1998. This list was then distributed to all regional CPNP leads across Canada. The list of regional CPNP leads was provided to the BCC Board in August, 1999. A networking framework for each province has not been developed.

Janet Murphy-Goodridge, the primary contact between the BCC and CPNP, has been contracted by Health Canada to continue to represent CPNP on the BCC. Janet prepares and presents a report on the BCC/CPNP partnership at each meeting of the BCC voting members and of the Board of Directors. Janet reports relevant breastfeeding information/research to Lauranne Matheson, Program Consultant, at the CPNP National office in Ottawa. Lauranne shares this information with the regional CPNP leads who, in turn, pass the information on to the individual CPNP projects. Following each BCC meeting, Janet reports to Judy Watson, Lauranne Matheson and the members of the CPNP Breastfeeding Working Group.

Janet has also completed three mailings to the members of the CPNP Breastfeeding Working Group containing breastfeeding information received from a variety of sources, including the BCC.

The CPNP Breastfeeding Working Group members continue to communicate by telephone conference call and e-mail. Janet continues to report to the Working Group regularly on the BCC/CPNP partnership development.

The CPNP National Office in Ottawa has sent to all CPNP project sites copies of all issues of *Breastfeeding Canada*, the BCC newsletter, published since fall 1998. That issue (Vol. 2 #2) included a report on the BCC/CPNP partnership development meeting held in April, 1998 and also included the first of four CPNP project profiles published between fall 1998 and winter/spring 2001. Janet Murphy-Goodridge prepared an update on the BCC/CPNP partnership including the joint vision statement for Vol. 4 #1 (Winter 2000). All issues have been published in both English and French. CPNP National Office also sent the Health Canada breastfeeding logo to all CPNP project sites.

All BCC voting members received “CPNP Four Years Old and Thriving”, CPNP “Reaching Canadian Communities” and the CPNP postcards following the partnership meeting in April, 1998.

A decision was taken not to issue a press release about the partnership at the time of the national launch and conference in Vancouver, November, 1998, as it had not yet been possible to communicate fully with CPNP project sites to explain the partnership.

Goal Three: Develop and implement a peer breastfeeding support model that provides sustained support in the community, that is in concert with existing approaches and that is in addition to what is provided by the final health care system.

Action 1: Complete a literature search on peer education/counseling breastfeeding models including the identification of existing resources.

Action 2: Submit proposals to solicit funds to develop a peer breastfeeding support model for communities.

The Workgroup members for this goal were all CPNP representatives to the April, 1998 partnership meeting and therefore part of the CPNP Breastfeeding Workgroup. The group devoted considerable time to the discussion of this goal via their regular telephone conference calls. However, it became evident that the work of this “national” group was coming into conflict with one of the guiding principles of CPNP, which states “decision making and action must be community based”.

As some CPNP projects had already developed and implemented peer breastfeeding support strategies and/or other effective approaches to protect, promote and support breastfeeding, it was deemed inappropriate for a national committee to select, support and demonstrate only one such approach. The working group therefore recommended that this goal be revised to reflect the need to develop a resource to assist all projects to increase their capacity to implement their own community-based peer support strategies.

The challenges that have been identified include the need to focus on peer support as a priority programming issue within Canadian communities and to secure adequate levels of sustained funding for peer breastfeeding support programs that reach socially marginalized women.

While the original goal remained incomplete at the end of 2000, this issue remains a priority for the partnership and plans are being made to broaden consultation and build awareness related to it.

The BCC/CPNP partnership has resulted in a number of outcomes not specifically identified in the activities included in the Plan of Action. These include:

- CAPC/CPNP National Project Fund Webpage is linked with the BCC's website
- CPNP is represented on most Provincial/Territorial Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Implementation Committees
- Janet Murphy-Goodridge, and Lynne Foley of Winnipeg, a CPNP Regional Director, represent CPNP on the BCC's BFI in the Community Committee. Leslie Ayre-Jaschke, Co-Chair of the committee, has, until recently, been a manager of the Building Better Babies CPNP project in Peace River, Alberta. This committee is developing implementation guidelines for the Baby-Friendly™ designation of non-hospital community healthcare facilities. The UK model for these guidelines was reviewed by the CPNP Breastfeeding Working Group in the early stages of the work of the BFI in the Community Committee.
- A published letter to the Editor from Janet Murphy-Goodridge to the Journal of Human Lactation highlighted the breastfeeding initiatives being undertaken by CPNP
- Copies of CPNP "Profile of Participants", CPNP Guiding Principles and background information and data from the evaluation of CPNP were provided to the BCC by Janet Murphy-Goodridge and distributed to all BCC voting members

Continuing activities of the BCC/CPNP partnership include:

- Publication, in the spring of 2001, of "**An Evolving Workbook to Support, Protect and Promote Breastfeeding in CPNP Projects**".

Lauranne Matheson and Janet Murphy-Goodridge jointly coordinated the development of this document with input from all levels of CPNP across Canada and review by representatives of the BCC. The document was developed to assist CPNP projects (or similar community-based prenatal program) to identify guiding principles and specific actions to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in a population health context. The English document is now available in PDF format and a French translation is expected to be complete by May 15, 2001.

At that time, both versions will be posted on the CAPC/CPNP web site. A printed version similar to the "Portrait of Participants" is also being planned. The workbook will be distributed to over 300 CPNP projects across Canada.

- A poster presentation, jointly developed by Lauranne Matheson and Janet Murphy-Goodridge, will be presented at Breastfeeding NOW, the national breastfeeding conference to be held in Moncton, NB in May, 2001. The title is **The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program: A Partnership to Promote Breastfeeding in Canadian Communities.**
- Lauranne Matheson will make a joint presentation with a CPNP project representative from the Atlantic region during the Breastfeeding NOW conference. The session will focus on the Evolving Workbook and the findings of the March 2000 breastfeeding Think Tank.
- Lauranne Matheson and Janet Murphy-Goodridge are currently preparing two articles for publication titled: **The Use of Incentives to Promote Breastfeeding in Disadvantaged Populations: An Ethical Dilemma** and **The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program: A Partnership to Promote Breastfeeding in Canadian Communities.** Both articles should be complete in April, 2001.
- Relative to the incomplete Goal 3 from the partnership action plan (1998-2000) Janet Murphy-Goodridge is currently developing a workplan which will identify the:
 - (a) evidence for sustainable peer support as a critical factor in successful breastfeeding
 - (b) key stakeholders and potential funding partners for a peer breastfeeding support strategy
 - (c) agenda, timelines and costs for a stakeholder consultation
- It is anticipated that a strategic teleconference meeting will be held by September 2001 with CPNP to determine the next steps in developing a peer breastfeeding support strategy for Canadian communities.

Conclusion

This partnership demonstrates how two diverse organizations with a mutual interest in the promotion of breastfeeding came together to establish common priorities for reaching a shared vision.

CPNP benefits from the direct communication link to a national breastfeeding organization representing all of the key stakeholders in breastfeeding in Canada. The partnership enables CPNP representatives to actively participate in key national, provincial/territorial and local breastfeeding initiatives, such as the UNICEF/WHO Baby-Friendly™ Initiative.

A CPNP project coordinator had this to say about the partnership ..."It has been great for both groups. It has been instrumental in helping the BCC become better informed about the challenges of working with Canadian women who, according to the research, are the least likely to breastfeed...CPNP has benefited through the increased profile of the program among BCC members, and because CPNP has been encouraged through this involvement to strengthen its commitment and support for breastfeeding, with the wonderful new breastfeeding guidelines being one of these results."

BCC members have increased their awareness of community based breastfeeding support initiatives. One former BCC member commented..."having CPNP at the table helped BCC members to become grounded in the realities of breastfeeding, particularly for women with limited resources in their communities."

The BCC wishes to express its appreciation to Health Canada for providing the funding necessary to hold the BCC/CPNP partnership development meeting at which the Plan of Action (1998-2000) was developed.

Thanks are also expressed to all BCC members and CPNP representatives who attended the partnership development meeting and participated in the workgroups identified for each of the three goals of the Plan of Action.

Both BCC and CPNP look forward to ongoing collaboration on breastfeeding initiatives at the community level.

May 2001