

QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVE CARE: A NURSING SOLUTION

Title	A BREASTFEEDING PARTNERSHIP
The Issue	<p>Breastfeeding is widely accepted by the World Health Organization (WHO), Health Canada and the Canadian Institute on Child Health as the optimum method of infant feeding for the first year or more of life as it reduces the risk of disease and strengthens mother-child bonding.</p> <p>Breastfeeding has been linked to lower health care costs. There is a need to increase the rate and duration of breastfeeding among Canadian women.</p>
A Solution	A coordinated breastfeeding initiative to increase breastfeeding rates and parental satisfaction.
An Example	<p>A group of Outaouais nurses led an interdisciplinary and multi-site partnership to heighten breastfeeding awareness and to coordinate regional approaches and breastfeeding initiatives. Only 60.8 per cent of mothers in the Outaouais region of Quebec breastfed their babies in 1997. This percentage fell to 25 per cent at three months, and 20 per cent at six months. Client education was restructured into three phases: decision phase (before birth), beginning phase (first days after birth) and the support phase (weeks and months after birth). This program ensured that everyone involved in counselling breastfeeding matters, lay or professional, conveys the same educational messages to parents.</p>
Results	<p>CLIENT-RELATED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-hospital breastfeeding rates rose from 60.8 per cent in 1997 to 70.1 per cent in 1999.• A reduction in postnatal breastfeeding-related telephone calls to support agencies related to maternal engorgement and infant jaundice was reported. This is attributed to greater uniformity and consistency in the education provided to parents.• Participation continues to increase at regional breastfeeding clinics since 1997.• Parents feel more capable of continuing breastfeeding following information and phased education.• Improved communication between health professionals and community organizations results in risk identification and rapid client/problem resolution.• Better cooperation exists between hospital and community staff and lay groups involved in breastfeeding initiatives.

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NURSING-RELATED:

- Nursing expertise in breastfeeding is recognized by other partners, such as physicians and nutritionists.
- Nurses and partners feel more supported in their interactions with clients, based on stronger discussion and information links.
- The nursing partnership initiative resulted in a research grant, program replication in the Saguenay Region, and communication of the research throughout Quebec, Canada, and Europe.

ECONOMIC:

- Cost-savings were estimated at \$289.29 per day due to reduced hospitalization of breastfed babies for conditions such as respiratory infections, as well as significant savings on medication and respiratory therapy.

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References:

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