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News Flash



breastfeeding  
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## NEWS FLASH: New Hospital Breastfeeding Accreditation Standards Impact Oregon

**Portland, OR** –Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon is pleased to report that beginning in 2014, Oregon hospitals with over 1100 births will be required to track exclusive breastfeeding rates for infants. Exclusive breastfeeding has been identified as a key component of the Perinatal Care Core Measure Set to be accredited by The Joint Commission (TJC). The Joint Commission is the accrediting body of most US hospitals. This measure tracks the hospital's use of formula when not medically prescribed by a doctor. TJC specified beginning January 1, 2014, maternity hospitals with at least 1,100 births per year are required to participate in this mandate in order to remain accredited. The implications of this new mandate are significant for babies born in Oregon. Based on 2011 data for live births in Oregon, there are at least 12 hospitals that would be subject to this mandate.

In Oregon 88.9% of women initiate breastfeeding at birth. By six months only 26.3% of women are exclusively breastfeeding. It is clear, women in Oregon understand the importance of breastfeeding, plan to nurse their babies, and start breastfeeding immediately after birth. Yet they stop shortly thereafter because they encounter numerous barriers. The new TJC requirements could provide a significant boost for breastfeeding support immediately after birth for women and babies. Dr. Nan Dahlquist, Medical Director of the Breastfeeding Center of Hillsboro Pediatrics and the Breastfeeding Coordinator of the American Association of Pediatrics in Oregon said,

“The medical evidence is clear: the benefits of breastfeeding are so compelling, it is one of the strongest personal actions a mother can take to improve long term health of her baby. Success with breastfeeding begins within the first hour after birth when mother and baby nurse for the first time. Limiting formula at the hospital and beyond, has been shown to be a positive impact on ensuring mothers produce enough milk for their babies”- Nan Dahlquist, MD, IBCLC, FAAP, FABM.

Currently, hospitals must follow “core measure sets” in four areas with other measures being optional. TJC is now requiring that hospitals enroll in 6 measure sets, and the Perinatal Care Core Measure Set will be a mandatory fifth core measure for maternity facilities with more than 1,100 live births per year.

The Perinatal Care Core Measure Set is comprised of five main measures. All five measures must be followed to satisfy the requirement. A key component of the Perinatal Care Core Measure Set is exclusive breast milk feeding as infant's first food. Research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has consistently shown that giving formula without a medical reason is one of the biggest predictors of early termination of breastfeeding. According to the CDC's Infant Practices Survey II, 60% of women do not meet their own breastfeeding goals.

This mandate combined with other efforts, such as the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding will provide systemic support for increasing breastfeeding rates and duration across the US, helping all women achieve their breastfeeding goals.

**For more information:** Contact the Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon (BCO). BCO is a strategic partnership with Oregon Public Health Institute to improve the health of all Oregonians. BCO represents professionals and families across Oregon with a shared interest in supporting, promoting and protecting breastfeeding.

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