

## **Breastfeeding Initiatives**

Objective 2.1: By 2030, increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding at six months by 2.5% annually through cross-sector breastfeeding policies, practices, and community supports/programs.

### *Kansas Breastfeeding Infrastructure*

While Kansas breastfeeding initiation (89.0%, 2024 Annual Summary of Vital Statistics) exceeds the national average, 6-month exclusivity rates (28.4%, National Immunization Survey, 2022) fall short of the Healthy People 2030 goal of 42.4% exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months. Comprehensive breastfeeding support is essential to improving breastfeeding initiation, duration, and overall maternal and infant health outcomes. Breastfeeding services and supports should be accessible, culturally responsive, and fully integrated across health care, public health, and community systems. To advance these goals, Kansas Title V will continue its partnership with the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition (KBC), which will lead implementation of the *Becoming the Lactation Support Provider You Want to Be* program. This initiative is designed to strengthen the breastfeeding support workforce by increasing the number of trained breastfeeding peer counselors, Certified Breastfeeding Counselors, and International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) equipped to provide culturally congruent lactation support and clinical care.

Additionally, KBC will provide technical assistance to physician practices pursuing the Breastfeeding Friendly Physician Practice designation and will host Enhanced Certified Breastfeeding Specialist training sessions to expand provider knowledge and capacity in lactation support. Recognizing the important role of early care and education settings in supporting breastfeeding families, KBC will also provide targeted training and resources for child care providers to strengthen their capacity to support breastfed infants and breastfeeding parents in child care settings.

### *Local Breastfeeding Coalition Support*

Local breastfeeding coalitions play a critical role in advancing equitable breastfeeding support by bringing together individuals, organizations, health care providers, public health professionals, employers, and community stakeholders to create coordinated systems of care for families. Effective coalitions are broad-based, diverse, and cross-sector partnerships that work collaboratively to ensure the environments mothers and families encounter every day are designed to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding success. These coalitions create opportunities for families and community members to share experiences, identify barriers, and develop community-driven solutions that address institutional, cultural, and systemic challenges related to breastfeeding. Through collaboration, coalitions strengthen public awareness and education efforts, reduce service duplication, leverage shared resources, foster cooperation across sectors, and enhance the overall impact and sustainability of breastfeeding initiatives.

In partnership with Title V, KBC will support and strengthen local breastfeeding coalitions serving underserved communities by connecting health care providers, public

health agencies, and community organizations with local breastfeeding information, services, and resources. Activities will focus on increasing local capacity, strengthening community systems, and improving access to culturally responsive breastfeeding support.

During FY27, KBC activities will include:

- Increasing the capacity of local breastfeeding coalitions and the public health workforce through the annual statewide breastfeeding conference held each October, bi-monthly Local Breastfeeding Coalition and Public Health Section meetings, and monthly emPOWER Talks focused on current lactation and breastfeeding topics.
- Supporting communities in achieving the “Community Supporting Breastfeeding PLUS” designation through technical assistance, collaboration, and systems-level improvement efforts.
- Assisting employers in achieving the Gold-level “Breastfeeding Employee Support Award” by implementing workplace policies and practices that support breastfeeding employees.
- Expanding participation in the “Breastfeeding Welcome Here” initiative by supporting public establishments in creating welcoming, breastfeeding-friendly environments for families.

Additionally, KBC will partner with local coalitions and community organizations leading efforts in safe sleep, breastfeeding, perinatal mental health, and substance use prevention to provide active learning opportunities, education, and referrals for families at increased risk of adverse maternal and infant health outcomes through Community Baby Showers (CBS). Specifically, KBC collaborates with the Kansas Infant Death and SIDS Network to plan and implement Community Baby Showers by connecting local breastfeeding coalitions, lactation support providers, and community-based resources to participating communities. Ongoing support will include providing evidence-based breastfeeding education materials, coordinating resources, and referring to local support services to strengthen community capacity and improve maternal and infant health outcomes statewide.

#### *KBC-MCH-WIC-Becoming a Mom (BaM) Program Collaboration*

Increasing access to consistent, evidence-based breastfeeding education and support by promoting shared messaging, coordinated referrals, and cross-sector collaboration among healthcare providers, public health agencies and community partners, integrating behavioral health supports when appropriate is a goal of Kansas Title V. To advance this strategy, the KBC will support local health departments in achieving the “Breastfeeding Friendly Health Department” designation and provide ongoing technical assistance to MCH Aid-to-Local grantees implementing. In collaboration with partners, the KBC will also support adapting the Becoming a Mom® Infant Feeding session for the Health Equity Opportunity Project (HEOP) curriculum, ensuring culturally responsive, evidence-based breastfeeding education. Additionally, the program will maintain and promote the "Breastfeeding Support by Kansas County" dataset to

improve awareness of available services, strengthen referral pathways, and increase access to breastfeeding support resources across Kansas communities.