



## Strategic Training to Improve Healthy Breastfeeding Practices for a Culturally Diverse Population

**Introduction:** Breastfeeding, with its many known health benefits for infants, children, and mothers, is a key strategy for improving maternal and public health. It is a dynamic, complex, living practice that optimizes a child's chances for reaching its full potential. Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. Optimal nutrition is critical for brain development and healthy infant growth. The data shows that low breastfeeding rates add more than \$3 billion a year to medical costs for the child and mother in the United States<sup>1</sup>.

The benefits of breastfeeding are not limited to infancy; they extend into childhood and even into adulthood. A history of breastfeeding is associated with decreased rates of common conditions, including eczema and obesity, and reduced rates of serious diseases, including type 2 diabetes and childhood leukemias. Hospitals and birthing

centers are the first impressions of a creative, supportive, and safe environment for mothers who take the initiative to breastfeed and must equip them with the right tools to be successful.

**The Problem:** The focus will be on health outcomes related to breastfeeding among rural and urban, culturally diverse moms. To achieve increased quality improvement outcomes, maternity staff in hospitals need to have more training on promoting healthy breastfeeding practices. Under the Health People 2030 initiative, there are specific goals for breastfeeding and reducing disparities in breastfeeding rates. Many hospitals do not have onsite lactation teams or onsite lactation consultants. Hospitals in rural areas are less likely to have access to an appropriate lactation specialist. Therefore, moms in those areas are unequipped with the right knowledge and support system to begin to try.

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Breastfeeding. Why It Matters.*  
<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/about-breastfeeding/why-it-matters.html>

**Solution:** Better healthcare outcomes means working with a dozen rural and urban hospitals to develop training plans. These strategic plans will improve the clinical competency of maternity staff to provide optimal breastfeeding support. Hospitals are serving an increasingly culturally diverse population. Maternity ward staff must develop knowledge, skills, and competency to support breastfeeding among these population groups, which would help further the Health People 2030 and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) mission to reduce disparities in breastfeeding rates. By providing skills-based competency training and ongoing support through the use of subject matter experts in the field, hospitals can implement related policies and procedures safely and as intended for mothers and babies.

Leveraging techniques recommended by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#), our approach focuses on creating quality outcomes for improvements among moms across rural areas and urban areas where there is a high culturally diverse population. The promotion would focus on three components, skin-to-skin care, rooming-in, and exclusive breastfeeding. In some cases, we will measure the transfer of knowledge from nurse to mom during a hospital stay. Metrics will measure training effectiveness and transmission. Deliverables of our solution include a digital toolkit that can be used as a guide for hospitals to adopt, strategic planning consulting to incorporate this training into the hospital's strategic plan, evaluation of training and the transfer of training, measures for follow-up on effectiveness through surveys.

**Experience:** [Rainmakers Strategic Solutions \(Rainmakers\)](#) brings a tremendous amount of experience with training, population health recruitment initiatives, quality improvement, and learning & diffusion. Rainmakers understands the need to approach learning support based upon improvement science methodologies, adult learning theory, and human-centered design.

Rainmakers has end-to-end capabilities in organizing and executing virtual and in-person training, organizing and facilitating focus groups, conducting environmental scans, and offering data visualization expertise to make information understandable and actionable. Rainmakers is adept at fulfilling a population health strategy.

For example, for the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#), Rainmakers fulfills the [Person & Family Engagement Strategy](#) through its Prime Contract for CMS for Patient & Family Engagement (PFE). Rainmakers performs PFE recruitment for CMS Technical Expert Panels (TEPs), working groups, or focus. The PFE task goals are to work with Measure Development Contractors (MDCs) to develop profiles of PFEs that will contribute to the TEPs.

Rainmakers collaborates with MDCs to provide resources that drive impactful healthcare measures and provide opportunities for persons and caregivers to contribute to quality measures. Rainmakers maintains regular communication with stakeholders related to our multiple contracts using various mediums, including a digital toolkit similar to those produced for maternity ward staff under the breastfeeding training initiative.

For this effort, Rainmakers partners with [Olive Branch Innovations \(OBI\)](#) to deliver this robust solution. OBI is a healthcare management and consulting firm focused on improving knowledge and skills in evidence-based maternity practices and overall maternal health. Within this track, maternity practices supportive of optimal infant nutrition is one critical competency. OBI understands the importance of equipping maternity wards with the training, skills, and resources needed to carry out the skills-based competency training for nursing staff on breastfeeding topics. OBI brings a network of lactation consultants and healthcare quality coordinators from women's oncology and labor & delivery wards to assist the team with appropriate measures to test and survey.



Excellence



Passion



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Knowledge

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