Changes in the WIC Program Environment

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My name is Natilie Rojas. I am a recipient of the WIC program for my son and myself. I have been breastfeeding now for a little over 10 months. The first 6 1/2 were exclusively breastfeeding. I would like some information on how to volunteer to become a breastfeeding peer counselor. I am looking to go back to school this coming summer and am interested in becoming a lactation consultant. I am very passionate about breastfeeding and would like to be able to give back to a program that has helped my son and myself so much. Please let me know what I can do to make this happen. Thank you so much!
When asked if she would consider being a spokesperson for WIC she wrote:

We would love to share our story. My son and I still have a wonderful nursing relationship and I'd love to share how WIC had helped me during my pregnancy. As well as how they continue to encourage our nursing relationship. Thank you so much.
the New WIC World...
90 State Agencies
1900 Local Agencies
10,000 clinic sites
1997

loving support
makes breastfeeding work
14 years later: SO MUCH has changed:

- BF legislation in MANY states
- Lactation accommodation a part of Health Care Reform
- Healthy People 2020 w EBF goals
- The Surgeon General’s Call to Action
- Many more Baby Friendly hospitals
- CDC collecting breastfeeding data/maternity practices/Bf report card
- Growing evidence for exclusive breastfeeding:
  
  Protective effect of EBF on obesity is incontrovertible
The WIC Program has stepped up to become the face of breastfeeding support in the community

- Active in coalitions/task forces
- Funds for peer counseling
- Terrific staff training curriculum
- NWA BF summit/strategic plan

ONLY PROGRAM WITH $$$$$$ to support breastfeeding!!
To assess WHERE the states are on the continuum of change for providing breastfeeding promotion and support, an informal survey was sent out to BF Coordinators through the NWA office on April 11, 2011.

Over 20 responses were received.

All USDA Regions were represented.
Responses by Region
Percent of Children Exclusively Breastfed through 6 Months of Age among Children Born in 2007 (provisional)

Source: National Immunization Survey, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services
Responses:

Staff Training: A resounding YES from all except ONE SERO state

Pumps for participants: Again the same response as above with the exception of the same state in the SERO

BF Mothers welcome at WIC: YES
Responses:

Overt formula images: Unanimous NO

Prenatal BF Education: Unanimous YES

BF Support Groups: 2/3 YES

IBCLCs on staff: 12 Yes; 2: soon; 4: NO

Home Visits: 2/3 YES
Responses:

Peer Counselors: Unanimous YES

No routine issuance of formula in the first month: 2/3 yes; (3 of 4 SERO; 1 of 2 MARO)

Marketing new food package: Unanimous YES

BF Mothers welcome at WIC: YES
General Conclusion:

While not every state responded, the trend of the responses indicates a WIC environment that had EVOLVED over the last 14 years; while levels of support vary there is a strong thread of LOTS OF BF SUPPORT available at WIC sites and a definite commitment to do better with breastfeeding.
Is it time for BF Service Standards: a minimum requirement for ALL states and local agencies to meet?
WIC staff is constantly working to hide the skeleton which keeps getting out of the closet:
The high retail value of formula makes it a fierce competitor to the improved BF packet.

Direct marketing, $$ off coupons, “new and improved” products with functional additives advertising untested claims work against WIC.

WIC is truly schizophrenic: we stand on our heads to promote bf but our nemesis is freely available....AND FROM US!
We can no longer afford this Collateral Damage
EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING MUST become the focus
“we now know in that it takes more than WIC, it takes the efforts of the full community of partners and agencies to make breastfeeding promotion and support a reality.”
many of our staff feel the mom is at a disadvantage if she does not get the formula.

Staff encourage the mom to take the formula and tell the mom that she will probably need it.
Percent of Children Who Are Breastfed at 6 Months of Age, Among Children Born in 2007 (Provisional)

Are you the lucky one who was breastfed to 6 months?

The answer should not depend on WHERE you are born!
MANDATORY

PROTOCOLIZED

CHANCE? LUCK?
This is our moment
Let's do right by these moms and babies