Starting a Local Breastfeeding Coalition

A coalition is a group of individuals and/or organizations with a common interest who agree to work together toward a common goal. That goal could be as narrow as obtaining funding for a specific intervention, or as broad as trying to improve the overall quality of life for most people in the community.

Why Start A Coalition?
• To improve breastfeeding rates and access to breastfeeding services
• To launch community initiatives on a variety of breastfeeding related issues
• To empower community to seek and support legislation that is breastfeeding friendly
• To establish and nurture community relationships that promote, support, and protect breastfeeding.

Taking it Step by Step

1. Put Together a Core Group - Include people interested in breastfeeding, representative of agencies who have a stake in breastfeeding (WIC, public health, Nurse Family Partnership, local hospitals and pediatric groups, doula groups), and influential people.

2. Identify Potential Coalition Members - Invite members to join your coalition from public and private health community, educational community, business community, ecumenical community, city and volunteer groups.

3. Plan and Hold Your First Meeting - Have networking and social time, discuss the main issues in your community, discuss structure of coalition, define your values and mission, create an action plan, and schedule your next meeting.

4. Move Your Feet! - Get started on the action plan that was agreed upon, create a website and Facebook page. Generate the vision and mission statements, work on the action plan, create bylaws, and finding funding. See http://ctb.ku.edu/

Resources

• Community Action Toolkit: PDF from Texas WIC - Community Action Kit for Protection, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding. Detailed information starting a breastfeeding coalition.
• United States Breastfeeding Committee - www.usbf.org
• Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition - http://www.cobfc.org/
• Hospital Support for Breastfeeding http://www.cdc.gov/VitalSigns/BreastFeeding/