

Division of Community Nutrition

<i>Subject: Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Standards of Practice</i>		<i>Policy: Appendix 16 - C</i>
<i>Reference: §C.F.R. 246.3</i>	<i>Effective: August 12, 2013</i>	<i>Supersedes: December 1, 2008</i>

Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Standards of Practice

- Promote consistency of practices and services by encouraging a common systematic approach
- Provide recommended framework for educational programs and quality improvement efforts

Standard 1. Professional Responsibilities

- 1.1 Act as an advocate for pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, and children
- 1.2 Assist the participant in initiating and maintaining a breastfeeding relationship with her infant/ child
- 1.3 Maintain and expand knowledge and skills for lactation management by participating in continuing education opportunities
- 1.4 Undertake periodic and systematic evaluation of one's practice by the local agency breastfeeding coordinator

Standard 2. Legal Considerations

- 2.1 Work within the policies and procedures of the Virginia WIC Program
- 2.2 Protect participant confidentiality at all times
- 2.3 Maintain records according to legal and ethical practices within the Virginia WIC Program
- 2.4 Yield to local agency breastfeeding coordinator, local agency WIC coordinator, or International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) for situations out of breastfeeding peer counselor scope of practice

Standard 3. Clinical Practice

The role of breastfeeding peer counselors within the Virginia WIC Program includes:

- assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation of lactation management within the WIC Program setting
 - anticipatory guidance and prevention of problems
 - complete, accurate, and timely documentation of care in Crossroads
 - timely communication and collaboration with other WIC personnel and health care professionals
- 3.1 Assessment
 - obtain and document an appropriate history of the participant
 - discuss any pertinent assessment information with the participant and document communications appropriately
 - 3.2 Plan
 - analyze assessment information to identify issues or problems
 - develop a goal and plan of care based on identified issues
 - arrange for follow-up evaluation where indicated

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3.3 Implementation

- implement a plan of care in a manner appropriate to the Virginia WIC Program and acceptable to the mother
- exercise principles of optimal health and safety
- provide appropriate oral and written instructions
- provide appropriate demonstrations of interventions, equipment, procedures, and/or techniques
- facilitate referrals to local agency breastfeeding coordinator, local agency WIC coordinator, International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), or other health care professional or community services
- document and communicate to WIC personnel appropriate:
 - assessment information
 - suggested interventions
 - instructions provided
 - evaluations of outcomes
 - modifications to plan of care
 - follow-up strategies

3.4 Evaluation

- Evaluate outcomes of planned interventions
- Modify the plan of care as needed
- Refer to local agency breastfeeding coordinator, local agency WIC coordinator or International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) when necessary.

Standard 4. Breastfeeding Education and Counseling

- Promote breastfeeding as the preferred infant feeding method
- Educate participants and families to encourage informed decision-making about infant feeding
- Be sensitive to the participants culture, questions, concerns, and preferred learning techniques
- Provide anticipatory guidance and teaching to:
 - promote optimal breastfeeding practices
 - minimize potential breastfeeding complications
 - provide positive feedback and support for continued breastfeeding
 - share current evidence-based information related to lactation management with WIC participants and personnel

Source: Adapted from International Lactation Consultant Association Standards of Practice for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants, 2005