Launched in 2015, Ohio First Steps for Healthy Babies is led jointly by the Ohio Hospital Association and the Ohio Department of Health. The program recognizes maternity centers in Ohio that have taken steps to promote, protect and support breastfeeding in their organizations. First Steps offers many opportunities for learning and networking to support the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, as defined by the World Health Organization and Baby-Friendly USA. The Ohio First Steps for Healthy Babies program recognizes hospitals for implementing the Ten Steps, using a modified application form. A five-star program, First Steps awards a star for every two steps achieved.

Since the program has been implemented, dozens of original educational resources have been created, with thousands of copies being distributed across the state. Free trainings across the state have reached hundreds of hospital staff, accounting for nearly all maternity hospitals in Ohio.

**Currently, 98% of maternity hospitals are engaged in the First Steps program.**

Preliminary data analyses appear to indicate that the First Steps program has had an impact in improving breastfeeding rates in Ohio hospitals.

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**Ohio First Steps**

**Highlighting Improvements in Breastfeeding Outcomes Across Ohio**

In partnership with the Ohio Lactation Consultants Association and Ohio Breastfeeding Alliance, created the Maternity Care Best Practice recognition for hospitals that did not provide free formula bags to new mothers. In its fourth year, **80 hospitals were recognized** for their best practices. An increase of 60% from year one.

**Highlights**

- Created educational materials on benefits of breastfeeding and the 10 steps. Distributed thousands of free copies of materials across the state.
- Awarded 2018 Best Abstract Award in Education, Quality Improvement, or Advocacy by the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Breastfeeding. Abstract titled "Ohio First Steps for Healthy Babies—impact of a state-based program to promote best breastfeeding practices for birthing hospitals", submitted by lead author Lydia Furman, MD.

In 2018, in support of the Step 2 focus on staff education, ODH **launched 15 online modules** on behalf of First Steps. Hospital staff can complete these at their own pace and receive continuing education, all at no cost.

**Hosted free Kangaroo Care trainings** across the state of Ohio through ODH. In addition, **hosted 19 free train-the-trainer sessions** across Ohio in support of Step 2, staff education and skills labs.
Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted have signed a proclamation recognizing the month of August as Breastfeeding Awareness Month. For 2019, Ohio’s theme was “Empower Families, Support Breastfeeding.” This theme focuses on the importance of supporting all members of a breastfeeding family, as well as working to advocate for breastfeeding-supportive environments in and around our local communities.

### A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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- **Ryan Everett, MPH**
  Director, Population Health
  Ohio Hospital Association
- **Bre Haviland, MS, RD, LD, CLC**
  Bureau of Maternal, Child and Family Health
  Ohio Department of Health

**Ohio First Steps Partners**
- **American Academy of Pediatrics, Ohio Chapter**
- **Association of State and Territorial Health Officials**
- **Ohio Breastfeeding Alliance**
- **Ohio Lactation Consultants Association**
- **Ohio WIC**

**Ohio First Steps Expert Team**
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  Summa Health System
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- **Laura Kinsley, MSN, APRN, RD, LD, FNP, IBCLC, CDE**
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  University Hospitals MacDonald Women’s Hospital
- **Julie Ware, MD, MPH, IBCLC**
  Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center
- **Susan Williamson, BSN, RN, IBCLC**
  University of Cincinnati Medical Center

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**HOSPITAL DATA**

**BREASTFEEDING RATES AT HOSPITAL DISCHARGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ever Breastfed</th>
<th>Exclusively Breastfed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015 72.6%</td>
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**OHIO PREGNANCY ASSESSMENT SURVEY DATA**

**Hospital Breastfeeding Practices Data Highlights (2017)**
- 94.4% Hospital staff provided breastfeeding information
- 90.6% Baby stayed in same room as mom at hospital
- 88.8% Baby placed skin to skin within first hour of life
- 87.2% Hospital staff helped mom learn how to breastfeed

**Improvements in Breastfeeding Rates**

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