



Center for Health Equity, Education, & Research

Vose Hall 3rd Floor • 88 East Newton Street • Boston, MA 02118

P: (617) 414.6466 • F: (617) 414.2662 • CHEERequity@gmail.com

www.CHEERequity.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dr. Anne Merewood, anne.merewood@bmc.org, 617-947-3683, CHEER Director, Boston Medical Center

Boston Medical Center Receives W.K. Kellogg Grant to Expand Implementation of Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative in Mississippi

(Boston) – Boston Medical Center’s CHAMPS program (Communities and Hospitals Advancing Maternity Practices) has received a \$1.5 million three-year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to increase breastfeeding rates, reduce disparities and improve maternity care practices in Mississippi through the Mississippi Communities and Hospitals Advancing Maternity Practices (MS CHAMPS) project. CHAMPS will accomplish these goals by providing technical assistance to 32 Mississippi (MS) hospitals in navigating the Baby-Friendly hospital designation process.

MS CHAMPS will build on the previously funded CHAMPS project in the southern United States. CHAMPS has supported 18 hospitals in MS in their Baby-Friendly journeys and will continue to do so with the new funding. Most of these hospitals had not begun the Baby-Friendly certification process before signing on with CHAMPS. The new funding will also allow CHAMPS to expand support to an additional 14 hospitals in the state. The main partner in this work will be Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE), which promotes breastfeeding nationally in the African-American community.

“We are grateful to the Kellogg Foundation for the opportunity to continue this work,” said Anne Merewood, PhD, MPH, Director of CHAMPS and an Associate Professor of pediatrics at BU School of Medicine. “We are honored to work in Mississippi and are thrilled to support the hospitals and the community for three additional years.”

At the same time, the former CHAMPS and Breastfeeding Center at BMC programs are becoming part of a new Center, the Center for Health Equity, Education and Research (CHEER), which will be directed by Dr. Merewood and run by the same team.

“CHAMPS and the Breastfeeding Center have expanded dramatically in recent years, and we now work in many areas, including Indian Health, breastfeeding, drug use prevention, domestic violence prevention, and community health assessment,” says Merewood. “CHEER will incorporate all these aspects and focus on achieving health equity for all.”

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) was launched in 1991 by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund to establish hospital environments that fully support breastfeeding. For a hospital to receive BFHI designation, it must meet the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, steps which include practices such as rooming-in (allowing mothers and babies to remain together 24 hours a day in the hospital), and pass an external assessment. Boston Medical Center was the first Baby-Friendly in Massachusetts when designated in 1999. Breastfeeding provides numerous emotional and health benefits for mothers and children, including protection against obesity and diabetes.





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Mississippi breastfeeding rates are among the lowest in the country, and its rates of obesity and diabetes are among the highest. CHEER will work to reduce these disparities by increasing the number of hospitals that fully support breastfeeding and the health of its mothers and babies.

In addition to MS, the CHAMPS team has successfully promoted the BFHI in Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, New Jersey, and within Indian Health Service, Tribal and Alaska Native birthing facilities in Alaska, Arizona, Montana, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

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About Boston Medical Center

Boston Medical Center is a private, not-for-profit, 487-bed, academic medical center that is the primary teaching affiliate of Boston University School of Medicine. It is the largest and busiest provider of trauma and emergency services in New England. Committed to providing high-quality health care to all, the hospital offers a full spectrum of pediatric and adult care services including primary and family medicine and advanced specialty care with an emphasis on community-based care. Boston Medical Center offers specialized care for complex health problems and is a leading research institution, receiving more than \$117 million in sponsored research funding in fiscal year 2016. It is the 13th largest recipient of funding in the U.S. from the National Institutes of Health among independent hospitals. In 1997, BMC founded Boston Medical Center Health Plan, Inc., now one of the top ranked Medicaid MCOs in the country, as a non-profit managed care organization. It does business in Massachusetts as BMC HealthNet Plan and as Well Sense Health Plan in New Hampshire, serving 290,000 people, collectively. Boston Medical Center and Boston University School of Medicine are partners in the Boston HealthNet – 14 community health centers focused on providing exceptional health care to residents of Boston. For more information, please visit <http://www.bmc.org>.

About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life. The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit www.wkkf.org.

