



Department of Health

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

SALLY DRESLIN, M.S., R.N.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

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Dear Health Care Provider:

Thank you for your interest in achieving the *New York State Breastfeeding Friendly Practice Designation*. Physicians and health care providers play an integral role in promoting and supporting a woman's decision to breastfeed. This promotion and support begins during pre-conception care and continues through prenatal, postpartum and ongoing care of the woman, the infant, and her family. Because of the well-documented health benefits of breastfeeding for infants, children, and mothers, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Department of Health and Human Services recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, with continued breastfeeding as long as mutually desired by the mother and infant.

While 86.6% of new mothers in New York initiate breastfeeding, only 56% of infants are breastfed for the recommended six months. Only 17% of infants are exclusively breastfed for the first six months, which is far below the Healthy People 2020 objective of 25.5%. The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has been working with hospital partners to improve hospital breastfeeding policies and maternity care practices to increase exclusive breastfeeding during the birth hospitalization and beyond. Additional efforts, however, are needed to promote and support breastfeeding women and infants in outpatient settings.

The *New York State Breastfeeding Friendly Practice Designation* program was developed to help guide and assist physicians and health care providers to improve their breastfeeding policies and procedures in outpatient settings. The *New York State Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Practice Implementation Guide* is a practice-based tool that details specific implementation strategies to embed the Ten Steps into practice.

To begin the designation process, see www.health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/breastfeeding/ and complete the following steps:

1. Review the *New York State Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Practice Implementation Guide* at www.health.ny.gov/publications/2970.pdf.
2. Complete the *New York State Breastfeeding Friendly Practice Designation* pre-assessment form at www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-5137.pdf. This form is designed to assess gaps in practice compared to the *New York State Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Practice* and the strategies listed in the Implementation Guide. Submit the pre-assessment to: promotebreastfeeding@health.ny.gov.

3. Work with your practice team to develop/update your breastfeeding friendly office policy and test, refine, and implement, at a minimum, all Ten Steps and the Required Implementation Activities and Office Policy Components outlined in the assessment survey. Please include strategies outlined in the Implementation Guide to create a more comprehensive policy.

After developing/updating and implementing your breastfeeding friendly office policy and implementing at least the minimum components of the *New York State Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Practice*:

1. Complete the New York State Breastfeeding Friendly Practice Designation post-assessment form at www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-5137.pdf and submit the completed form to: **promotebreastfeeding@health.ny.gov**.
2. Submit your practice's written breastfeeding policy to: **promotebreastfeeding@health.ny.gov**. Ensure the date your policy was approved at your practice is noted on your policy.

The designation process does not allow for on-site visits to evaluate how well the breastfeeding friendly office policy has been integrated into the work of your practice. Therefore, please ensure that the final submitted policy illustrates how the policy functions in practice.

Practices that achieve all *New York State Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Practice* will be recognized with a Certificate of Designation and designated practices will be listed on the NYSDOH's public website. The certificate expires after five years. At that time, you will need to submit another post-assessment and updated office policy.

Thank you for your commitment to improving the health and well-being of New York's women and infants, and for working towards becoming a breastfeeding friendly practice. For questions or technical assistance regarding the *New York State Breastfeeding Friendly Practice Designation*, please email **promotebreastfeeding@health.ny.gov** or contact us at (518) 408-5142.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Dennison, M.D.
Director, Policy and Research Translation Unit
New York State Department of Health