

BREAKING DOWN CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND LOGISTICAL BARRIERS TO BREASTFEEDING

Healthy Babies, Empowered Moms, Flourishing Families in Sunflower County, MS



POWERED BY

The
**BUILD
HEALTH**
Challenge®

BOLD

Work to fundamentally shift attitudes and norms around breastfeeding at the individual, community, and system levels



UPSTREAM

Improve the feasibility and convenience of breastfeeding by preparing workplaces and child care centers to accommodate breastfeeding moms and babies



INTEGRATED

Align protocols for breastfeeding education and support during all medical visits throughout pregnancy and postpartum



LOCAL

Partner with the Sunflower Community Advisory Board and members of the Social Service Collaborative to guide project messaging



DATA-DRIVEN

Collaborate with the Sunflower County Health Department WIC program team to track the increase in breastfeeding mothers

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



**SUNFLOWER COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

COMMUNITY IMPACT



Transitioned from in-person to virtual Let's Talk Baby Café meetings, increasing attendance of breastfeeding moms from 240 to 600+



Significantly increased participation of family members supporting breastfeeding moms



Reached 275+ families with breastfeeding information via drive-through events and parent educators

INTRODUCTION

Parents in the Delta region of Mississippi are like parents everywhere: When their babies are born, they do everything they can to keep them healthy. One of the most important decisions a family makes for their newborn's health is how to feed them—early nutrition in infancy and childhood is a determinant of long-term health, after all. However, when it comes to feeding their babies, Black mothers in rural communities face challenges on a number of fronts. Financial instability, lack of access to essential health care and transportation to medical appointments, and food insecurity can complicate new moms' efforts to provide breast milk to their babies. Many Black moms initiate breastfeeding, but only a small percentage are still nursing their infants at six months.¹ Along with the daily struggles creating logistical barriers to breastfeeding, Black mothers experience social barriers—breastfeeding is not a cultural norm for many, so family and community support might be unavailable. Families who want to try breastfeeding often feel alone, and the systems around them generally don't support their efforts.

New parents in the rural community of Sunflower County, Mississippi, wanted to overcome these barriers in order to provide the optimal nutrition of breast milk to

their infants. They were looking for a peer community of other breastfeeding moms, breastfeeding education and assistance, and ways to make changes in their environments. Many Black mothers were experiencing a lack of support for breastfeeding not just from their families and friends, but from their workplaces and child care facilities as well. Therefore, they sought ways to ensure accommodation of their nursing and pumping breast milk in all of those environments.

Delta Health Alliance (DHA), a nonprofit serving the health, education, and workforce needs of Mississippians, and its Delta Breastfeeding Coalition (DBC) initiative listened to the families they serve. DHA partnered with the Sunflower County Health Department and South Sunflower County Hospital to create Healthy Babies, Empowered Moms, Flourishing Families. This collaborative deployed community health workers to address women's attitudes and family/community awareness of breastfeeding benefits, advocate for public workplace policies, and work with child care centers and other businesses to improve services and support for breastfeeding moms. At the heart of this work was the creation of the Let's Talk Baby Café,² a safe and non-judgmental drop-in space where moms could come and nurse their babies, relax, and often get direct support from each

other, as well as from lactation experts. First an in-person community and then a virtual gathering because of the pandemic, the Let's Talk Baby Café (Baby Café) has grown to include many who might not otherwise have participated, including interested prenatal or nursing moms from farther away and family members, like dads or grandmothers. The collaborative's complementary efforts to educate local employers, child care providers, and businesses on how to help nursing mothers feed their babies and maintain milk supply have resulted in a community-wide shift of attitudes and practices. The community is beginning to embrace breastfeeding as a norm.

Breastfeeding protects against allergies, sickness, and obesity. It protects against diseases, like diabetes and cancer. It protects against infections, like ear infections. [Breastmilk] is easily digested. Breastfed babies even score higher on IQ tests.
—Dr. Deborah Moore,
Community Partner

This collaborative effort is one of 18 such community-driven partnerships currently supported by an innovative

¹ Racial Disparities in Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration Among U.S. Infants Born in 2015. Center for Disease Control Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), 2019, [https://www.joghn.org/article/S0884-2175\(18\)30022-4/pdf](https://www.joghn.org/article/S0884-2175(18)30022-4/pdf)

² The Let's Talk Baby Café is the Delta chapter of Baby Café USA, a national nonprofit that supports the development of licensed Baby Cafés across the country, <https://www.babycafeusa.org>

funding collaborative and award program, The BUILD Health Challenge® (BUILD), that is contributing to the creation of new norms in the United States. BUILD is putting multi-sector, community-driven partnerships at the center of health to reduce health disparities caused by system-based or social inequity. An intentional commitment to advancing equitable systems-level changes in their community distinguishes BUILD partners from other health-focused efforts. Over the course of BUILD's three cohorts, both the collaborating funders and the 55 participating communities have evolved in their understanding and pursuit of health equity. At the heart of this story is health equity—both its absence and its indispensable role in reducing health disparities caused by social inequity.

One of the most important decisions a family makes for their newborn is how to feed them. Early nutrition in infancy and childhood is a determinant of health.—Jackie Lambert, Let's Talk Baby Café

BACKGROUND

Rural Sunflower County is located in the Mississippi Delta, in the northwest corner of the state. Its rich history is centered around Blues music, civil rights activism, agriculture, and faith. Geographically isolated, with less public infrastructure (such as internet access) than surrounding counties, Sunflower's population of about 26,000 people is majority Black (72 percent). Residents are experiencing significant poverty, with a per capita income of \$14,427 and 36 percent living below the federal poverty line. All public school children qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. Only about 70 percent of residents have a high school diploma and close to 10 percent are unemployed.³

Sunflower County residents, particularly mothers and babies, have poor health outcomes. Mississippi is one of only four states that received an "F" grade for preterm birth rates from the March of Dimes and the county has the eighth-highest infant mortality rate in the state.⁴ In fact, fewer than 1,000 babies are born in Sunflower County each year, leading to its lowest population since 1900.⁵ Labor participation by moms is 80 percent, yet they primarily work in low-wage



jobs with dynamic scheduling and rigid shift requirements. Black moms are half as likely to receive adequate prenatal care as white moms and they often have to return to work before their postpartum check-ups.⁶ This issue is exacerbated by a significant health provider shortage in the region. In addition, 60 percent of births in 2020 were financed by Medicaid.⁷

Research shows that breastfeeding has significant benefits for both mothers and babies, particularly for Black infants, who are at higher risk of health problems—including death—in the United States.⁸ Breastfed children experience lower rates of lower respiratory tract infections, severe diarrhea, ear infections, and obesity.

³ All population statistics obtained from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sunflowercountymississippi> Rows=%7B%22states%22:%7B%22mississippi%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortMod-el=%7B%22colld%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D

⁴ http://msdh.ms.gov/phs/2019/Summary/bthsumm_state_2019.pdf

⁵ ibid

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7662160/>

⁷ <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/births-financed-by-medicaid/?currentTimeframe=0&selected>

⁸ Factors That Influence Breastfeeding Initiation Among African American Women, *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*. 2018 May;47(3):290-300. doi: 10.1016/j.jogn.2018.02.007. Epub 2018 Mar 15.



Mothers who nursed their children for longer than a year are better protected against diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancers of the breast and ovaries.¹⁰ The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding of infants for the first six months and encourages mothers

who are able to continue nursing for at least one year and beyond.

While Latino, Asian, and white families in the U.S. tend to initiate breastfeeding at higher rates than Black families,¹¹ the majority of Black women do seek to breastfeed. In fact, 69 percent initiate breastfeeding at birth.¹² Since just 17 percent of Black babies are still breastfed at six months, the lack of continued breastfeeding is due to other challenges. Research on factors that influence breastfeeding by Black mothers found that juggling too many responsibilities, a lack of information provided during pregnancy, shame associated with feeding in public, and low levels of family support are just some of the reasons they couldn't begin or maintain breastfeeding.¹³

Therefore, breastfeeding is not just a public health imperative, it's also an equity issue.¹⁴ Invitations to and support for breastfeeding help Black communities overcome challenges and heal from trauma. Many grassroots efforts, like the Baby Cafés, are working not just to help individual moms embrace breastfeeding but also to shift public attitudes and

business practices so entire communities can embrace maternal and baby health.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding of infants for the first six months of life before introducing nutritious complementary foods, while encouraging social and systemic changes to support mothers who choose to breastfeed.⁹ Many of our Black babies in the Delta of Mississippi have not been given the opportunity to be breastfed because breastfeeding has been viewed as being culturally and socially unacceptable and inconvenient by some. Through the work of the BUILD project, Delta Health Alliance and its partners are working to tackle these issues that involve systems, policies, the environment, as well as attitudes.—Dr. Deborah Moore, Community Partner

⁹ The AAP outlines its recommendations and evidence of significant health benefits to infant and mother in “Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk.” Published in the July 2022 issue of *Pediatrics*, <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/150/1/e2022057988/188347/Policy-Statement-Breastfeeding-and-the-Use-of>

¹⁰ <https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2022/american-academy-of-pediatrics-calls-for-more-support-for-breastfeeding-mothers-within-updated-policy-recommendations/>

¹¹ 2018 National Immunization Survey (NIS) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

¹² <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6834a3.htm>

¹³ Factors That Influence Breastfeeding Initiation Among African American Women, *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*. 2018 May;47(3):290-300. doi: 10.1016/j.jogn.2018.02.007. Epub 2018 Mar 15.

¹⁴ <https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2022/american-academy-of-pediatrics-calls-for-more-support-for-breastfeeding-mothers-within-updated-policy-recommendations/>

APPROACH

Delta Health Alliance is an organization bringing together more than 40 programs focused on improving access to health services, promoting healthier lifestyles, and expanding educational opportunities for residents of the Mississippi Delta. Located in the county seat, Indianola, DHA hosts the Delta Breastfeeding Coalition. In partnership with the Sunflower County Health Department—site of the local WIC office—and South Sunflower County Hospital, DHA supports the DBC’s work to mitigate cultural and logistical barriers to breastfeeding in Sunflower County by:

- 1) Conducting targeted outreach and culturally appropriate communications to improve mother and family attitudes toward breastfeeding
- 2) Advocating for local workplace and child center policies conducive to breastfeeding, and
- 3) Providing supplies, tools, and technical assistance to create and amplify use of nursing/pumping rooms in workplaces, child care centers, and other public spaces.

Prior to the BUILD award, DHA implemented several early childhood

ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY: Health disparities for Black and brown babies and moms should be addressed at the individual, community, and system levels. Healthy Babies, Empowered Moms, Flourishing Families provides both direct education and supports to make breastfeeding more feasible—through the Let’s Talk Baby Café, breastfeeding-friendly businesses and policies, and system-level intervention to train and hold accountable medical providers who deliver care to Black moms and infants.

programs in Sunflower County, including home visiting programs to support improved maternal and child health. Over time, low birth weight infants and healthy spacing of pregnancies were improving. Yet other maternal wellness indicators, like postpartum mental health, were trending downward. Therefore, DHA began looking for upstream approaches to support breastfeeding initiation and continuation, which they knew would help more moms and babies thrive. South Sunflower County Hospital, meanwhile, had conducted a community health needs assessment and identified infant mortality (9 percent of all births in the state of Mississippi¹⁵) as a priority issue. The only labor and delivery hospital in the county and the fourth-largest employer in Indianola, the hospital had taken steps to earn a Baby-Friendly Hospital designation.¹⁶ Its participation in

the BUILD collaborative was an extension of its work to move breastfeeding support from the hospital, immediately postpartum, to community settings. “Baby-friendly designation is a 10-step framework for hospitals and the foundation is breastfeeding,” said Melanie Williams, Vice President of Home Visiting Initiatives of Delta Health Alliance.¹⁷ “The WIC program has an MOU with South Sunflower County to provide prenatal breastfeeding education (Step 3) and postnatal breastfeeding support in the community (Step 10),” she added.

To assess existing community supports for breastfeeding, DHA surveyed local employers about their policies and practices—if any existed—related to breastfeeding and/or pumping breastmilk in the workplace. The survey found that two-thirds of businesses had no explicit policy on

¹⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7662160/>

¹⁶ The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), a global program that was launched by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund in 1991, recognizes hospitals and birthing centers that offer an optimal level of care for infant feeding and mother-baby bonding. According to their recommendations, breastfeeding is key to ensuring a baby’s best health, as outlined in BFHI’s “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.”

breastfeeding or pumping, but the majority said they “would” or “maybe would” allow women to pump at work and half identified space they could make available for lactation rooms.

Breastfeeding promotion in the prenatal period and breastfeeding support in the postnatal period is very important for families to move past the hurdles or barriers they may encounter.—Jackie Lambert, Let’s Talk Baby Café

Additional information on new mothers and babies in Sunflower County was provided by the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) WIC program, which was monitoring trends in state breastfeeding data. When it began offering WIC families a subscription to the Pacify mobile app, MSDH also had more information on why, when, and what types of breastfeeding support WIC moms were seeking.¹⁷ These data assisted the BUILD collaborative team with refining strategies to address the needs of breastfeeding families in Sunflower County. “There’s been a lot of work all over the state on breastfeeding and it was important that this project flow into existing efforts,

especially around baby-friendly hospitals, which is critical to a small rural area,” shared Kimberly Ramsey, Director of the MSDH WIC Breastfeeding Program.

LET’S TALK BABY CAFÉ

In 2019, Delta Breastfeeding Coalition began hosting weekly in-person Let’s Talk Baby Café meetings for pregnant, postpartum, and nursing mothers and families to learn about the benefits of breastfeeding, receive support, and share stories and experiences. Spaces like the Baby Café—non-threatening, non-judgmental, and hosted by women who look like and have similar lived experiences as visiting moms—have been helping families get comfortable and confident with breastfeeding around the country. There wasn’t a space like that in Sunflower County, where a large population of WIC participants could benefit from the support and where the baby-friendly hospital, health providers, and community organizations sought to find ways to improve health and quality of life for young families.

When it became clear that COVID-19 would make in-person gatherings unsafe, DBC worked hard to move the Baby Café to a virtual platform, so mothers could join by computer while still having the conversations and receiving the counseling to help them



reach their breastfeeding goals. As WIC counselor and lactation specialist at Let’s Talk Baby Café Jackie Lambert said, “There were new questions about the safety of breastfeeding [with COVID and vaccinations] so we were following the research to help mothers and we needed to find innovative ways to stay engaged with community partners who could provide resources to our moms.” When the team shifted to a virtual environment for the Baby Café out of necessity, they discovered that many more folks from different parts of the county and the state showed up to the virtual Baby Café. Suddenly, they were reaching many more moms and, importantly, more family members of those moms. “A lot of support people are joining in the conversation,” shared Melanie Williams. Added Lambert, “We would average only about 5 to 10 people weekly when we

¹⁷ <https://www.babyfriendlyusa.org/for-facilities/practice-guidelines/10-steps-and-international-code/>

¹⁸ The Pacify app provides 24/7 perinatal and infant feeding support to new and expecting parents via their smartphones, connecting families to a nationwide network of doulas, lactation consultants, and registered nurses within minutes, <https://www.pacify.com>

were in person. With the virtual Baby Café setting, and referrals from our community partners, we averaged about 20 to 50 people weekly. To me, that was a success ... it let us know that families wanted the information but other barriers stood in the way.”

The families know what they need to be successful in fulfilling their breastfeeding goals. We are here just to help assist them in their goals by adding support, information, and assistance, and provide the platform for them to meet other moms who may have the same struggles.

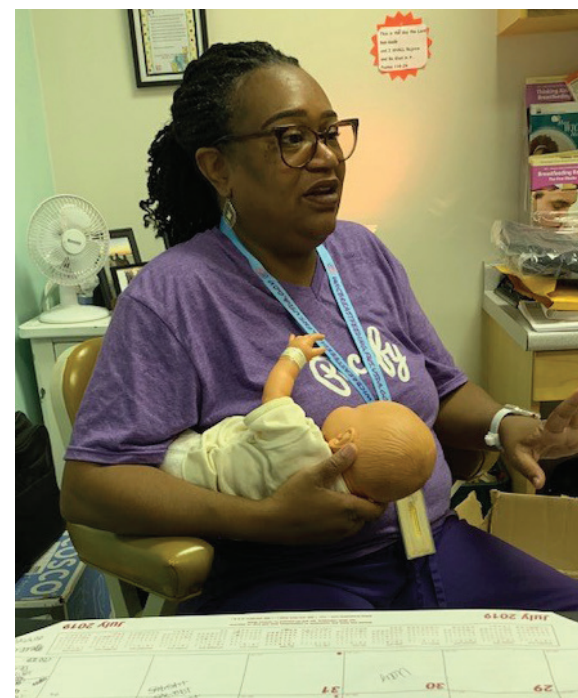
—Jackie Lambert, Let’s Talk Baby Café

The inclusion of other family members in the conversation, such as grandmothers and great-grandmothers, added a challenging but important opportunity to respectfully educate influential people in mothers’ lives. Some of these people might still be affected by the historical trauma and social taboos about breastfeeding present in the Black community. Added Kimberly Ramsey, “We find that historical trauma has been passed along from one generation to another. When we’re providing counseling and the grandmother is there, often they will push back because of the history and cultural expectations

around formula. The Baby Café gives us the chance to offer intergenerational education in a comfortable, family-feeling setting.”

The weekly Baby Café sessions sometimes include external speakers for additional education and to spark discussions among participating families. Topics have included maternal morbidity in Black women, the benefits of breastfeeding, and the myths about and barriers to breastfeeding. During a typical quarter (DHA’s tracking period), the Baby Café will host over 60 pregnant women, 30 nursing moms, and 50 partners or other family members. More recently, two evening sessions for moms who have suffered an infant loss were provided in partnership with the Mississippi Worker Center. Ouida Parks, a licensed professional counselor who spoke to the group on topics related to grief and loss, was sponsored by the Center. Families also received a small stipend for participating.

In addition, other stressors on Black moms and families were showing up in Baby Café conversations and other venues. “Although our program has not directly addressed police brutality,” noted Vanessa Wilson of Delta Health Alliance, “we work with pregnant women and new moms who face environmental and social stress as Black women in Mississippi, and we have discussed stress constantly. Moms are concerned as they prepare to give birth to children in the same environment where



they have faced racism over generations.” Let’s Talk Baby Café has served as a safe space for discussing stress in pregnancy and childbirth, and a source of support for coping.

As COVID-19 restrictions ease, the virtual Baby Café continues to be the BUILD collaborative’s primary outlet for providing breastfeeding support and education to families in the community. The Café also participates in community outreach events and makes referrals to WIC for moms who need assistance securing a breast pump. Through a partnership with Indianola Excel by 5, which provided growth charts, helpful

books, and additional materials, the collaborative developed a breastfeeding discharge packet provided to delivering moms at South Sunflower County Hospital.

Sunflower County is 71 miles long geographically. Building relationships with employers is just so key to connecting all of the dots. We can provide all of the direct education, but if a mom doesn't have support and accommodation when she goes back to work, it won't stick.
—Dr. Deborah Moore, Community Partner

BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY BUSINESS INITIATIVE

Mothers in many of the local industries—hospitality, agriculture, and distribution/logistics—were working in environments with no safe place to express breastmilk and no method of storing it. In addition, their children were in child care centers or with home-based providers unfamiliar with or not welcoming of breastfeeding. In order to convince Sunflower County-based businesses and child care providers to support working mothers' efforts to nourish their babies through breastfeeding, the collaborative

launched a Breastfeeding Friendly (BFF) Business Initiative.

BFF Business Initiative activities included the development of an education toolkit—with health information and ideas for how to become breastfeeding friendly. The toolkit was co-designed with many community partners, including DBC and the local chapter of the Human Resource Managers Association, and distributed to businesses in Sunflower County and surrounding counties.

Through the BFF Business Initiative, and armed with the toolkit, the collaborative team began working with local day care providers to help them provide better supports to breastfeeding moms. These included special nursing and pumping areas, as well as education for nursing moms about when and how to wean their breastfed babies. The team worked with the Sunflower Childcare Partnership to provide breastfeeding education to their members. Hearing that child care providers needed pumps for their facilities, the team began—with the help of the MSDH WIC office—refurbishing pumps to be placed in day care centers for breastfeeding moms to use. “We get so excited when day care providers ask us for support to help their clients successfully breastfeed babies in their care,” said Jackie Lambert.



The BFF Business Initiative also involved outreach to and meetings with key business organizations that might influence their members to become breastfeeding friendly. For example, the team met with the Sunflower Economic Development organization to share copies of the toolkit and encourage them to raise the issue with members. DHA also sponsored a 3.5-hour virtual conference on what is involved in—and the potential benefits of becoming—breastfeeding friendly. The conference offered Continuing Education credits and was a big success, with many participating employers, health care providers, and other interested parties.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Members of the Healthy Babies, Empowered Moms, Flourishing Families team reported that it has been heartening to find unexpected partners in this journey to change community attitudes about breastfeeding. In August 2020, Indianola Mayor Steve Rosenthal made a supportive proclamation during Breastfeeding Awareness Month and issued a challenge to other mayors to express similar support and encourage their communities to embrace breastfeeding. DBC used that opportunity to raise more awareness and engage new partners in other municipalities throughout Sunflower County. It became a viral challenge—as mayors completed the proclamation, they challenged mayors in surrounding communities to complete it as well.

Public awareness also occurred via drive-through resource distribution events hosted in partnership with community organizations serving families, such as Sunflower County Head Start/Early Head Start, Tobacco-Free Mississippi, and Delta Diaper Bank. At the Head Start Center, 250 participants drove through and received breastfeeding information, plus materials on local services and resources, as well as masks, hand sanitizer, and other supplies to keep their families safe during the pandemic.

POLICY

Legally, Mississippi mothers have the right to breastfeed wherever they want. Since the Mississippi Legislature codified the right to breastfeed in 2006, however, multiple bills to more formally and broadly promote breastfeeding throughout all state-provided social services and licensing lactation specialists have failed to gain momentum.¹⁹

DHA and its BUILD partners continue to work to inform parents of and advance their rights for breastfeeding, especially within the work environment. During the height of the COVID pandemic, Jackie Lambert partnered with the Center for WorkLife Law at the University of California Hastings College of Law and the United States Breastfeeding Committee to create a flier with common questions and concerns on workplace breastfeeding rights for working women. This information was distributed to families through the Let's Talk Baby Café and discussed in a legislative session. The Center for WorkLife Law—along with A Better Balance, a national workers' rights organization—is also collecting stories from Baby Café parents to support the development of a communications toolkit parents can use to advocate for more breastfeeding supports.



Other potential policy solutions are on their radar. Springboarding off the collaborative's work with day care providers, DHA is considering how to advocate for the institution of new day care regulations that include breastfeeding support. The team is also developing new insurance regulations that would require subsidization of electric breast pumps, which are often too expensive for Sunflower County families to purchase out of pocket. "We are always trying to figure out better ways to support access through policy," noted Melanie Williams, "though our biggest advocacy tool is still the Baby Café."

¹⁹ For example, <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2020/pdf/HB/0300-0399/HB0380IN.pdf>

THE FUTURE

Delta Health Alliance, Sunflower County Health Department, South Sunflower County Hospital, and other community partners are now focusing on coalition building to expand the impact of their efforts to increase breastfeeding and remove barriers to breastfeeding. The Healthy Babies, Empowered Moms, Flourishing Families team is working with Health Connect One on the First Food Equity Project to engage communities in increasing breastfeeding intention, initiation, and duration. The collaborative also is supporting the creation of new groups that will bolster support for breastfeeding.

With all that we have learned about building relationships and working with all parts of our community, we're looking to build new partnerships that will help us make this a breastfeeding-friendly community.—Jackie Lambert, Let's Talk Baby Café

Jackie Lambert has also been invited to participate in the United States Breastfeeding Committee's Technical Assistance Community Planner Cohort. Participants receive training on how to plan, create, and provide technical



assistance. Additionally, they will be planning and hosting workshops for coalitions to strengthen their capacity and build strong groups focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

While the virtual Let's Talk Baby Café remains popular, DHA was able to use Rapid Response Funds—a COVID-19 grant program—to build out and equip a new physical Baby Café space. With new technology and hardware that facilitates hybrid Baby Café sessions, the new space will continue to connect and engage families in a training room. It will also provide an updated, comfortable, quiet place for moms to

breastfeed and/or pump. The new DHA site is identified as a safe, clean space for breastfeeding on the Pumpspotting app, which supports new parents with breastfeeding information and resources.

Members of the Healthy Babies, Empowered Moms, Flourishing Families collaborative are confident that their work will continue to make a difference. As Melanie Williams emphasized: “Because of the strong bonds created by our collaboration, the development of the Delta Breastfeeding Coalition, and the strength and reach of the Delta Health Alliance, our impact on family health in the Delta will continue to grow.”



The Build Health Challenge® is contributing to the creation of a new norm in the U.S.—one that puts multi-sector, community-driven partnerships at the center of health in order to reduce health disparities caused by systemic or social inequity.

BUILD is a national program designed to support partnerships between community-based organizations, health departments, hospitals/health systems, health plans, and residents that are working to address important health issues in their community. Each community collaborative addresses root causes of chronic disease (also commonly referred to as the social determinants of health) in their local area by moving resources, attention, and action upstream. To date, BUILD has supported 55 projects across the U.S. over the course of three award cycles.

To learn more about BUILD, visit buildhealthchallenge.org.

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