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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: ***Pediatrics* Paper Shows Increase in Breastfeeding Rates When US Hospitals Gain Baby-Friendly Designation**

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On June 7, 2017, the prestigious *Pediatrics* journal published an online article on the effectiveness of a collaborative approach to Baby-Friendly implementation. The article, “Best Fed Beginnings: A Nationwide Quality Improvement Initiative to Increase Breastfeeding,” spotlights the CDC-funded work of the National Institute for Children’s Health Quality (NICHQ), “Best Fed Beginnings (BFB),” which successfully brought 72 (80%) out of 90 hospitals to Baby-Friendly designation, and saw a large increase in breastfeeding rates along with implementation.

Several CHEER/CHAMPS (Communities and Hospitals Advancing Maternity Practices) team members were part of the NICHQ team that performed this effective initiative and published the *Pediatrics* paper. CHAMPS Physician Lead Lori Feldman-Winter, MD, MPH served as faculty chair for the NICHQ/BFB initiative; CHAMPS Director Anne Merewood, PhD, MPH was regional consultant for NICHQ/BFB; and CHAMPS Community Engagement Director Kimarie Bugg, DNP, MSN, FNP, MPH, IBCLC was regional consultant for NICHQ/BFB.

In an effort to increase the low number of Baby-Friendly hospitals in the U.S., BFB engaged 90 hospitals across the nation between 2011 and 2015 in a collaborative, quality improvement initiative. *Pediatrics* reported the impressive April 2016 results, among them: exclusive breastfeeding increased from 39% to 61% at participating hospitals; BFB nearly doubled the number of Baby-Friendly hospitals in the U.S.; and 218,000 more infants are delivered each year at Baby-Friendly hospitals because of BFB.

“The results of this initiative are encouraging as more and more hospitals strive to achieve Baby-Friendly status,” says Feldman-Winter.

CHAMPS team members Feldman-Winter, Merewood, and Bugg carried the lessons learned from the NICHQ/BFB initiative into CHAMPS’ ongoing work to support hospitals across the U.S. to become Baby-Friendly. CHAMPS is currently working in Alaska, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas, with a joint focus on the South and on hospitals that serve American Indian/Alaska Native populations. CHAMPS recently received \$1.75 million in new funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Bower Foundation to support additional hospitals in Mississippi towards Baby-Friendly designation over the next 3 years. Breastfeeding rates in Mississippi are among the lowest in the nation.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative 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 Baby-Friendly 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.

To learn more about BFB’s accomplishments, attend NICHQ’s webinar with the paper’s authors on August 2, 2017: http://nichq.org/blog/2017/june/pediatrics_bfb_paper

