

# CHALLENGE

100State Problem-Solving Soiree:  
*Innovating Public Health with Ninjas for Health*

# BREAST FEEDING

How can we make breastfeeding in public the norm?

## BACKGROUND

One of the most highly effective preventive measures a mother can take to protect the health of her infant and herself is to breastfeed. However, in the United States, most mothers stop breastfeeding earlier than they intend. The success rate among mothers who want to breastfeed can be greatly improved through active support from their families, friends, communities, clinicians, health care leaders, employers, and policymakers. Unfortunately, breastfeeding barriers including judgment of public feeding makes women feel uncomfortable breastfeeding and feel the need to be "discreet". The general public, while supportive of breastfeeding as a practice, still is uncomfortable with seeing women nurse their babies. Despite Federal and state laws to protect nursing in public for the health and well-being of mothers and children, it is critical that we take action to create a culture supportive of breastfeeding.

## KEY FACTS

- 60% of women stop breastfeeding before they intend.
- Though 77% of babies start out being breastfed, only 16% are exclusively breastfed 6 months later.
- Wisconsin statute states: *"A mother may breastfeed her child in any public or private location where the mother and child are otherwise authorized to be. In such a location, no person may prohibit a mother from breastfeeding her child, direct a mother to move to another location to breastfeed her child, direct a mother to cover her child or breast while breastfeeding, or otherwise restrict a mother from breastfeeding."*

## CONSIDERATIONS

- It's helpful to identify low or no-cost strategies.
- We're looking for ideas that encourage breastfeeding in public: uncovered and NOT in a separate, 'private' space.
- Men who have no experience with a breastfeeding partner are exactly the audience we need to reach, so please bring that perspective to the table.



The mission of the Wisconsin Breastfeeding Coalition is to improve the health of Wisconsin by working collaboratively to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding. In order to achieve optimal health, enhance child development, promote effective parenting, and make optimal use of resources, our vision is that breastfeeding will be the norm for infant and early childhood feeding in Wisconsin.

# QUESTIONS

- 1) How can we make breastfeeding in public the norm, not a problem?
- 2) What does a supportive infant feeding culture look like? How can we get there?
- 3) What kind of information do public venues need to be able to support women nursing in public? How do we get that information to them?
- 4) How do we get the general public to understand they are part of a larger community that can, even unknowingly, support or discourage breastfeeding?

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- [Breastfeeding Mom Asked to Leave Dining Area at Grampa's Pizzeria](#) (July 25, 2013)
- [Racine's "We're Better Together" campaign](#)
- [Madison's "Nursing is Normal" project](#)
- [Community Breastfeeding Promotion Awards program](#)
- [Poet Shamed by Breastfeeding](#)
- [We must stop these crazed half naked psychopaths from feeding their children in front of other people](#)