Breastfeeding Peer Counselors as Primary Lactation Care Providers in the NICU

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www.rushmothersmilkclub.com

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- Anne and Kenneth Griffin Foundation
- Rossman Family Foundation
- Nicolas Berggruen Foundation

Rush University Medical Center, Chicago
Rush NICU

- Regional perinatal center responsible for 31,000 live births
- 72-bed, single patient room NICU
- Family-centered care
  - 24-hour visitation
  - Care by parent
  - Parents attend medical rounds
- Skin-to-skin care is routine
- 98% of infants receive mothers’ own milk

Within the NICU, the RUSH Mothers’ Milk Club is a state-of-the-art lactation and human milk feeding program

Translational Research within a Clinical Program of Lactation Care

- Practice: Families receive state-of-the-art, evidence-based lactation care by the entire NICU staff
- Research: Families and infants serve as subjects in the team’s internally and externally funded research projects

The RUSH human milk team serve as primary researchers as well as primary NICU care providers
What do we study?

- Health outcomes and cost savings of human milk feeding
- Mechanisms that underlay these outcomes
  - Maternal barriers to the provision of human milk
  - Use of lactation technologies to remove “guesswork” of human milk calories and milk intake during breastfeeding
- Models of lactation care delivery that yield quality, satisfaction and cost savings
- Impact of donor human milk on health and cost outcomes
- Impact of donor human milk on maternal provision of their own milk

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Initiation and Maintenance of Lactation: Proactive Care by Entire NICU Team

NICU Bedside Nurses

- Skin-to-skin care
- Pumping at the bedside
- Prioritizing and protecting maternal milk volume
- Feeding at breast in the NICU
- Preparation for NICU discharge

“Both baby formula and mothers’ milk are foods for NICU babies. However, only mothers’ milk—not baby formulas—works like a medicine to help protect premature and other NICU babies from many complications during and after the hospital stay.”

Insert from “Your Milk is a Medicine for Your Baby”
• Clarifies HOW decisions are made about medications in NICU.

• Clarifies factors that influence amount of medication that reaches infant's bloodstream.

• Informs parents about references for compatibility of medications with breastfeeding.

• Clarifies that the NICU staff—not the prescribing MD—should decide about suitability of milk for feeding.

• Indicates that NICU staff will consult with prescribing MD at parents' request.

• Clarifies that mothers will make "good" milk even if their diet is not ideal.

• Clarifies that a "good" diet helps to protect their own body stores, but "nature" protects the baby by making good milk.

• Informs parents that milk changes taste and smell depending upon diet, and encourages them not to avoid cultural foods.

• Emphasizes that foods rich in DHA result in higher concentrations in the milk.

• Discourages weight-loss diets, but emphasizes that lactation brings natural weight-loss advantage.
Weekly Mothers’ Milk Club Luncheons Provide a Forum to “Share the Science” about Human Milk and Lactation

Rush Mothers’ Milk Club Volunteer Breastfeeding Peer Counselors
Jameca Benjamin and daughter, Jamia

Jamia was born Dec, 2000, at 25 weeks of gestation, weighing only 1 pound, 13 ounces.

Jameca knew mothers' milk was best, but had never known a person who had breastfed.

The Rush Mothers' Milk Club helped her achieve her goals, and prepared her as a volunteer breastfeeding peer counselor in Summer, 2001.
Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation

Funded January, 2005

Implement and evaluate the role of a salaried breastfeeding peer counselor for mothers with VLBW infants in the Rush SCN

Peer Counselors complete 5-day La Leche League Peer Counselor Training Program, including examination
Excerpt from “In Your Hands”, ©Rush Mothers' Milk Club, 2011
Start of the Day: Review status of all newly admitted infants and their families with the charge nurse or nurse lactation specialist.

Initial Visits to New Mothers Take about 1 Hour.
BPCs assist with the first pumping session for all new NICU mothers

- Proper use of the pump is taught
- Breast shield sizing is done
- Pump hygiene is reviewed
- Pump rental is organized

Each BPC Maintains a Photo Album of Her or His NICU Baby from Birth through Current Age

Discussion focuses on impact of human milk on the infant's outcome

Teaching Correct Labeling of Milk Storage Containers
Correct Cleansing of Breast Pump Equipment is Demonstrated for Each Family

Extra milk is moved out of the NICU and carefully stored in our industrial freezers that are temperature-controlled.

BPCs are in the NICU and Available to assist Nurses 7 days a week and from 7A-9:30 PM
In Your Hands

www.rushmothersmilkclub.com

In Our Hands

www.rushmothersmilkclub.com

Lunch with the Rush Mothers' Milk Club: Sharing Science and Support

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