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## Development of the NYS Breastfeeding Initiative

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### Development of the NYS Breastfeeding Initiative

#### Background:

The internship project was established by the Bureau of Women's Health (BWH) of the New York State Department of Health. The BWH has promoted breastfeeding through multiple programs. However, because of the lack of resources, a specific breastfeeding initiative has not been developed. An evaluation of the Regional Breastfeeding Networks (RBN) was a critical component to establish the initiative.

Internship Objectives: a) identify data systems relevant to breastfeeding policy; b) conduct an assessment of the NYS RBN; c) develop a resource of the RBN.

Methods: Accessed and utilized existing data systems to identify trends; identified 19 RBN; developed an evaluation tool; conducted an assessment of the RBN; developed a resource guide of the RBN.

Results: The assessment revealed that the RBN established in 1980s exist and function in 31 NYS counties. There was no clear definition of the "breastfeeding network". Existing list of the RBN included not only "networks" but also hospital-based breastfeeding support groups, WIC programs, and perinatal networks. There were a number of other community-based organizations whose roles remained unclear. There may be an overlap in providing breastfeeding services by the RBN and other community-based organizations.

Conclusions and recommendations: Develop a clear definition of the "breastfeeding network"; survey organizations providing breastfeeding services regardless of definition and location; continue to catalogue information on breastfeeding resources; collect data on "exclusive breastfeeding"; incorporate results of the project to develop a statewide breastfeeding initiative; and encourage network providers to collect race and ethnic data.