



of care for mothers and infants. It is hoped Thompson General Hospital will become the first health facility in Manitoba to be designated as a Baby Friendly Hospital.

The initiative protects, promotes and supports breastfeeding through the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. This includes:

- Have a written Breastfeeding Policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff
- Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement the policy
- Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding
- Help mothers to initiate breastfeeding within 30 minutes of birth
- Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants
- Give newborn infants no food or drink, other than breast milk, unless medically indicated
- Practice rooming-in, allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day
- Encourage breastfeeding on demand
- Give no pacifiers or soothers to breastfeeding infants
- Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them upon discharge from the hospital

The BRHA's Maternal Health Team also promotes skin to skin. Putting a baby in skin-to-skin contact with his or her mother is found to be the best transitional place for infants. It promotes nurturing through the hormonal pathways and is found to stabilize an infant's heart rate, blood sugar and temperature, which have a lasting impact on a baby's health.

On Sept. 16, a mock assessment of the maternity unit at Thompson General Hospital was conducted by the Manitoba Baby Friendly Implementation Committee Chairperson and a Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative assessor from the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada. Breastfeeding promotion activities and materials used by the BRHA were evaluated against the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. Feedback from the visit was positive and encouraging.

The next steps include increasing breastfeeding mother-to-mother support and partnership building with First Nation communities.



There were a total of 56 mothers who participated in this year's Breastfeeding Challenge on Saturday, Oct. 3, including 21 mothers who gathered at the Burntwood Community Health Resource Centre.