

## Whose Infants Get to Breastfeed in Marin?



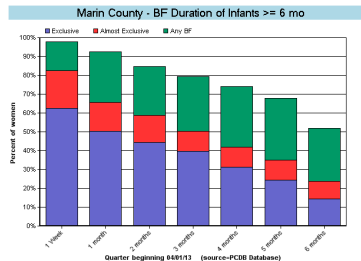
## Few Infants have Access to Breastfeeding for the Recommended Amount of Time

- ▶ A number of factors influence a woman's breastfeeding intentions.
- ▶ Characteristics associated with lower breastfeeding prevalence include younger age, lower income, less maternal education, and unmarried status.
- ▶ Racial/ethnic differences in breastfeeding persist.
- ▶ Marin County average breastfeeding rates at hospital discharge:
  - Any - 98.9% Exclusive - 80.4%
  - Ranked 7th in the state for exclusive breastfeeding.

It's up to All of Us



## Marin County WIC Breastfeeding Rates



## Does Marin Have High Breastfeeding Rates Because of Affluence?

- ▶ "Breastfeeding is a natural "safety net" against the worst effects of poverty. If the child survives the first month of life (the most dangerous period of childhood) then for the next four months or so, exclusive breastfeeding goes a long way toward canceling out the health difference between being born into poverty and being born into affluence .... It is almost as if breastfeeding takes the infant out of poverty for those first few months in order to give the child a fairer start in life and compensate for the injustice of the world into which it was born." ~James P. Grant, former Executive Director, UNICEF.

## Why Do So Many Women Not Meet Their Breastfeeding Goals?

- ▶ 1. We are each responsible for the decision to breastfeed, and 2. Breastfeeding is socially determined.
- ▶ "Each statement taken separately is false, but taken together they are jointly true."
- ▶ Breastfeeding falls exactly at the focal point of those two health determinates. It is something any woman can decide to do for reasons of improving her own health and the health of her children and family.
- ▶ And what is also true, is that social institutions, agencies, and governments can do a lot to support breastfeeding and help see to it that more women are successful in their efforts.

## Actions for the MCFP

- › Draft community support for breastfeeding policy and action statement.
- › Enlist MCFP member agencies and programs to develop breastfeeding support strategies of their own.
- › Draft letter of support for WIC Business-Community Alliance.



## Marin Breastfeeding Coalition



**Mission:**

To promote breastfeeding in Marin County, support activities that make it the norm, decrease barriers, and increase acceptance within families and the community.

