

Healthy People 2030 public comment opportunity

HC One strongly concurs with Ifeyinwa Asiodu PhD, RN, IBCLC comment to “strongly support the inclusion of the MICH-2030-02: Reduce the rate of all infant deaths (within 1 year) objective. Black communities are disproportionately affected by poor maternal and infant health outcomes including higher incidence of prematurity, low birth weight, maternal and infant mortality and lower rates of breastfeeding. Thus, we need to continue monitoring and collecting data on infant mortality with a focus on racial and ethnic disparities”

HC One strongly concurs with Ifeyinwa Asiodu PhD, RN, IBCLC comment to strongly support the inclusion of the MICH-2030-04: Reduce maternal deaths objective. Black communities are disproportionately affected by poor maternal and infant health outcomes including higher incidence of prematurity, low birth weight, maternal and infant mortality and lower rates of breastfeeding. Black women are 234% more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth related causes. Thus, we need to continue monitoring and collecting data on maternal mortality and morbidity with a focus on racial and ethnic disparities.” - Ifeyinwa Asiodu PhD, RN, IBCLC

Comment Expressing Support for 6 Months Exclusive Objective

We strongly support exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months as a Core Objective for Healthy People 2030. Breastfeeding is a proven primary prevention strategy, building a foundation for life-long health and well-being. The evidence for the value of breastfeeding to children's and women's health is scientific, solid, and continually being reaffirmed by new research. All major medical authorities recommend babies receive only human milk for their first six months, and continue to breastfeed (with the addition of appropriate complementary foods) for at least the first 1-2 years of life. Monumental health and economic gains can be achieved through policy and practice changes that ensure families have the support they need. If 90% of infants were

breastfed according to medical recommendations, 3,340 deaths, \$3 billion in medical costs, and \$14.2 billion in costs of premature death would be prevented, annually!

While national, regional, state, tribal, and community organizations across sectors and across the U.S. have remained dedicated to helping our Nation meet and exceed the breastfeeding objectives since they were first established for Healthy People 2000, the impact of this work extends far beyond this particular objective. Supporting breastfeeding can contribute to reaching a multitude of the proposed HP2030 objectives: reducing the risk of obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, and asthma in children and reducing the risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers in mothers.

Social, physical, and economic environments have a significant impact on the breastfeeding experience and there are a variety of evidence-based interventions to increase breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity, including efforts to improve maternity care practices, increase continuity of care, and support breastfeeding in the workplace and in public spaces. Over the past several decades, the Healthy People initiative has helped drive attention to breastfeeding support, and as a result, breastfeeding rates have increased, but stark racial and geographic disparities remain. At the same time, disparities in health outcomes between racial groups persist. Removing disparities in breastfeeding rates is a critical step for addressing and eliminating health inequities and achieving health equity. There is still significant work to do to close gaps in breastfeeding rates. To ensure continued momentum and progress toward creating a landscape of breastfeeding support across the United States, it is critical that Healthy People 2030 maintains a focus on breastfeeding.

Importantly, the Healthy People 2030 launch will take place close to the launch of the 2020-25 edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which for the first time, will include guidance for infants and toddlers (from birth to age 24 months), and women who are pregnant. It is critical that both the Healthy People and Dietary Guidelines demonstrate strong support for breastfeeding.

Topic Area: Maternal, Infant, and Child Health

New Objective: Increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed through 12 months

Objective Rationale: All major medical authorities recommend that babies get no food or drink other than human milk for their first 6 months and continue to breastfeed for at least the first 1-2 years of life. While exclusive human milk feeding at 6 months is the gold standard, as recognized by the inclusion of this objective in the HHS proposal, it is also critical to assess the duration of any breastfeeding. Given the systemic barriers to breastfeeding that inequitably burden minority and underserved communities, it is important that we continuously assess movement in duration of any breastfeeding up to 12 months to test the strength of interventions to increase breastfeeding rates across the field. Alternatively, the 12 month breastfeeding measure could be included as a sub-objective of MICH-2030-15. The annual Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Immunization Survey provides a reliable, nationally representative data source to track progress on this proposed objective.

Proposed Baseline and Unit of Measure: 35.9% (2015 births), Breastfeeding Rates among Infants

Proposed Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Immunization Survey

Anticipated number of data points throughout the decade: 10

Propose Adding an Objective on Maternity Care Practices to Support Breastfeeding

Topic Area: Maternal, Infant, and Child Health

New Objective: Increase the proportion of live births in facilities providing recommended care for lactating mothers and babies

Objective Rationale: Healthy People 2020 included eight breastfeeding objectives (including four sub-objectives) reflecting breastfeeding behaviors as well as policy, systems, and environmental factors that impact breastfeeding families. I/we strongly urge the Secretary's Advisory Committee and Federal Interagency Workgroup to maintain Healthy People 2020 Objective MICH-24 to increase the proportion of live births that occur in facilities that provide recommended care for lactating mothers and their babies as a core objective in Healthy People 2030. The *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*, developed by the World Health Organization and UNICEF, have been shown to establish a strong start to the breastfeeding relationship—the first step toward reaching the HP2030 Core Objective (MICH-2030-15) to increase exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months. There is substantial evidence that implementing the Ten Steps increases breastfeeding initiation, exclusivity, and duration. Further, the racial disparities that plague our Nation's breastfeeding rates are not reflected in breastfeeding rates at discharge from hospitals that have implemented the *Ten Steps*. The biannual Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Breastfeeding Report Card provides a reliable, nationally representative data source to track progress on this proposed objective's target. The Report Card includes state-specific data.

Proposed Baseline and Unit of Measure: 26.1% (2018), Percentage of Live Births Occurring at Baby-Friendly Facilities

Proposed Data Source: Baby-Friendly USA and National Center for Health Statistics

Anticipated number of data points throughout the decade: 10