

The Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition Statement on Equity

Vision Statement:

Breastfeeding equity refers to the ability of all persons to access services, resources, and knowledge that lead to optimal maternal and child health outcomes. The current environment reveals many barriers to optimal health related to ethnicity, culture, geographic location, and income. Focusing on breastfeeding equity requires a high value for all breastfeeding families, directly addressing social factors that determine health outcomes, and prioritizing activities that eliminate barriers for those who have experienced historical trauma or violence, systemic racism, or chronic socioeconomic disadvantage.

Mission Statement:

Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition has adopted the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion with the support and modeling from the United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC). As a member organization of the USBC, the MBC abides by the USBC Equity guidelines. These require a commitment to applying an equity mirror and equity lens to all activities. Since 2014 MBC has focused on equity and access to breastfeeding support at its annual meetings and workshops, supporting a licensure bill that would increase access to breastfeeding services, forming an equity and access subcommittee, and partnering with entities such as the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), Minnesota Department of Health, and Minnesotans for Paid Family Leave to increase access to underserved communities in Minnesota.

The MBC recognizes that equity and access needs to be woven into its strategic plan and objectives. The equity-and-access specific objectives from years 2017 to 2019 include the following:

- Create an Equity and Access Subcommittee charter and initial plan that will lead to a 20% increase in diversity in the Steering Committee and subcommittees (to include age, geographic, race, gender or other).
- Nominate a person (or persons) of color to the Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition BOD to serve starting January 2019
- Develop a strategy and identify the resources needed so MBC can determine where and what types of lactation care (professional, certified and peer) currently exists across the state. This objective will show where access to appropriate and equitable lactation care is lacking.
- Explore and identify opportunity for shared participation in one new organization outside the traditional lactation community and in underrepresented communities. . The shared participation would be reciprocal and a way to foster MBC involvement, with a steering committee or board member attending and bringing a breastfeeding lens to another organization whose primary focus is not breastfeeding (e.g., infant mortality, church, women's issues group), and vice versa.

Finally, the Board of Directors of the MBC recognizes that we do not yet have diversity on the Board nor in the Steering Committee. The MBC has pledged to take actions to remedy this as leadership that reflects the broader community and having all voices participating in planning and decision-making are essential to moving towards a higher level of health equity.