



## AltaMed Clinics Improve Breastfeeding Rates

Already on track to improve breastfeeding support, the **AltaMed General Pediatrics Clinic at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA)** fast-tracked comprehensive breastfeeding services and policies, with impressive results.

AltaMed was one of 15 grantees in a one-year, CDC-funded, Community Clinics Breastfeeding Support project of the California Department of Public Health. The experiences and feedback provided by staff at AltaMed reflect the experiences of all the participating clinics as they identified successful strategies as well as challenges to implementing comprehensive breastfeeding support.

Commitments from interdisciplinary clinic providers and staff, plus community referral and communications systems with hospitals, WIC agencies, health plans and durable medical equipment providers (DME/ breast pumps), are needed to establish the continuum of care for pregnant and breastfeeding moms and babies.

Under the leadership of Dr. Jonathan Goldfinger, AltaMed at CHLA took steps to implement comprehensive policies and practices including:

- Training for medical assistants, dietetic interns, occupational therapists, providers, residents, clinic

administrators, hospital staff and WIC agencies

- A breastfeeding-friendly clinic environment including spaces to breastfeed, comfortable recliners, breastfeeding posters, educational materials, and no formula marketing
- Modified clinic operations and work flow to register mothers and babies
- A model interdisciplinary Lactation Clinic, staffed by IBCLCs and MDs, with successful billing for lactation services
- Analysis of billing data
- Routine collection and regular analysis of breastfeeding data, weights, and outcomes from the Electronic Medical Record (EMR).

These combined efforts resulted in:

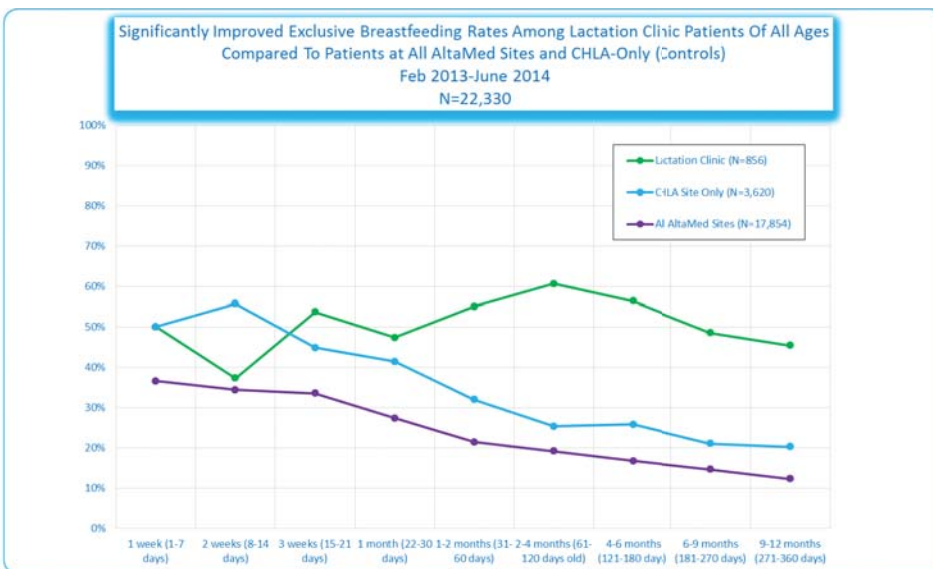
### Better Breastfeeding Rates:

- **More than 95% of Lactation Clinic babies are breastfed**; 73% make it to 12 months; and mothers happily reach infant feeding goals.
- **45% of babies seen at Lactation Clinic are breastfed exclusively through 12 months of life**, compared to **20%** seen by CHLA pediatricians only, and **12%** seen at other AltaMed sites. (See graph.)
- Lactation Clinic mothers are more than twice as

likely to exclusively breastfeed past 6 months than mothers seen by *physicians only* at the AltaMed General Pediatrics Clinic at CHLA, and over 3 times more likely than mothers seen by *physicians only* at other AltaMed Clinics.

**Use of IBCLCs:** Reimbursement rates, at least at Federally Qualified Health Centers such as AltaMed, are enough to support IBCLC staffing in clinics. **AltaMed at CHLA’s Lactation Clinic now runs 2 days a week with IBCLCs.**

**Higher Reimbursement:** Approximately 75% of all Lactation Clinic





## Breastfeeding News



*Dr. Jon Goldfinger, MD, MPH, FAAP, Nicole Meadow, RD, IBCLC, and Debra Diaz, IBCLC, staff the Lactation Clinic at the Los Angeles AltaMed Community Clinic.*

claims, for both mother and infant visits, have been paid. AltaMed was able to bill for all types of insurance, but analysis indicates low frequency of payment among PPO plans. Comparatively, Medi-Cal and Medi-Cal Managed Care plans paid 88% of infant claims and 79% of maternal claims. Because AltaMed is a Federally Qualified Health Center, increased payment frequency from these public insurers was expected. Statewide, reimbursement rates will vary due to the large number of plans and contracts for Medi-Cal, Medi-Cal Managed Care, HMO and PPO plans. Regardless, **AltaMed's analysis provides important data for breastfeeding support business models and the provision of Preventive Services required by the Affordable Care Act.**

**Meaningful EMR Use:** Staff helped identify EMR fields that could be used for breastfeeding data. Dr. Goldfinger then analyzed data extracted from these fields to compare breastfeeding rates over time of patients seen in the Lactation Clinic, the AltaMed General Pediatrics Clinic at CHLA (where the Lactation Clinic is housed), and other clinics in the AltaMed system. Lactation staff was trained to appropriately chart for data extraction and billing. **AltaMed is ahead of many clinics in its ability to input, extract, and provide ongoing, reliable**

**breastfeeding surveillance data, but all clinic grantees in the project dedicated significant effort toward this.**

With 22 clinics seeing predominantly underserved families system-wide, and a successful start at the CHLA site, AltaMed opened a second interdisciplinary lactation clinic in Santa Ana in late June 2014, and opportunities for further system expansion look promising.

For more information on the AltaMed Lactation Clinic at CHLA contact Dr. Jonathan Goldfinger at [jgoldfinger@chla.usc.edu](mailto:jgoldfinger@chla.usc.edu). For more information on breastfeeding policies and community clinics, attend CWA's August 21 webinar (see page 2), visit the CWA website or contact Karen Farley, [kfarley@calwic.org](mailto:kfarley@calwic.org).

## Grow Our Own Lactation Consultant Course Open for Fall 2014

It takes a village to make breastfeeding the norm! And the Grow Our Own Lactation Consultant Course uses a community approach to education, bringing together health professionals from diverse areas within the community to better serve the neighborhood.



This AARC-approved 105-hour course will be offered by Riverside County Department of Public Health Lactation Services in Rancho Cucamonga, starting in September. Following the IBCLC Exam Blueprint Disciplines and Chronological Periods, Grow Our Own is designed to help further your career goals and increase your confidence through knowledge, raising job satisfaction.

To find out more, visit <http://calwic.org/events/grow-our-own-lactation-consultants>, attend the August 5 informational webinar described on the flyer, or contact KayEllen Layscheck at [klaschec@rivcocha.org](mailto:klaschec@rivcocha.org).