



# Santa Barbara County PHD Nutrition Services / WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program



## Bfed Texting Program (1/14)

Santa Barbara County WIC's Nationally Recognized Unprecedented **Bfed Texting Program**.  
Possible the first two way breastfeeding texting program in the United States and the world.

### 1) Specific goals

- Meet the communication / needs of Gen Y via texting.
- Targeted Social Marketing of breastfeeding messages via texting.
- Increase breastfeeding rates above baseline.

### 2) Objectives

- More efficiently and effectively send specific breastfeeding texts to participants in our Peer Counselor Program. One click of a button sends the message to everyone vs. texting message on the PC's phone.
- Messages can be targeted to prenatal vs. postpartum participants.

### Texting Program Overview:

Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (PHD) Nutrition Services / WIC's Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BPC) Program is partnering with Educational Message Services (EMS), Inc. located in Ventura California to develop, implement, and evaluate a text messaging program for participants in our BPC program. Educational Message Services (EMS) is a social marketing and health information technology (IT) agency, recognized and awarded for merit in designing, implementing and managing multi-faceted interventions in health promotion. EMS utilizes "narrowcast marketing" services for highly targeted health promotion supported by more than 15 years and Prevention Pays Text Message Services™ since 2005.

In the winter of 2011, it was evident that texting was a popular method of communication in our BPC Program. At this time, approximately 90% of PC participants had cell phones and 100% agreed to texting. Participants would often not answer the phone yet text back immediately. In June 2011, Santa Barbara County WIC Breastfeeding team developed breastfeeding text messages for pregnant and postpartum women. Text messages were developed by Leanna Moore Watson BS, CLEC (now IBCLC for WIC) and translated into Spanish by Karina Pineda. Text messages were reviewed by WIC and the breastfeeding team.

- ▲ Text messages begin at 12 weeks prenatally biweekly and continue weekly at week 26. Occasionally there are two texts per week
- ▲ Postpartum there are two texts per week
- ▲ Automated texting ends at 10 weeks postpartum

## How the Bfed Texting Program Works:

Educational Message Services operates a texting platform. We have developed the Bfed name and short code 893... Participants have to agree to the texting program and send back a code word to “opt in” to the texting program. This means they agree to receive the texts from WIC’s BPC Bfed texting program. EMS runs a private server having 128 bit encryption that is HIPAA compliant. The also meet the requirements of the online Privacy Act, Federal Association of Short Codes (CASA), and all cell phone carriers. The texting program has to pass or it can not continue. Texting platforms have stringent requirements and spam texts are against the law.

The Bfed Texting Program is web to text based via cell phone. The computer web program sends an automated message at predetermined intervals – one way communication. This texting program is unique in that it allows for two way interactive communication. The participant can text back to the BF Peer Counselor. The PC can enter into a dialogue typing on their computer to the participant who receives the message as a text. This helps the texting program feel more personable. Both PCs can be in the WEB based program at the same time responding to their own participants. Another advantages is that it is easier to type on a keyboard rather than a cell phone. Research indicates that people will say more in a text than on the phone. Productivity and accuracy are increased. This texting program will allow for us to collect data on the number of participants, number of texts received, and responses. WIC summer volunteer Katie developed a two page evaluation that we will send out in September each year. Sustainability of programs using semi-automated electronic communications system is improved by much lower costs in subsequent years.

The Verizon computer to text program shortfalls are: (An option in Santa Barbara County)

- 1) It is only one way communication – a message goes out and the receiver can not text back.
- 2) You can not preprogram the messages. We will have messages sent automatically biweekly to weekly.
- 3) We can not collect data – how may people, number of text, wording of text, number of participants that receive all the texts.
- 4) Can not have multiple responders (Arelly & Sandra on at the same time).
- 5) There is no opting in or short code.

More than 12 agencies have started this breastfeeding texting program nationwide since the NWA Webinar in March 2013. Our 2014 goal is to speak at the National WIC Association (NWA) Conference.

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Formula Increase the Risk of Diabetes & Obesity  
Breastfeeding - A Social Justice Issue

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