

SECRET

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REQUEST FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON HEALTH FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE REVISED TEN STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING AS PART OF THE CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION OF PRIVATE HEALTH FACILITIES IN THE NIGERIAN HEALTH SYSTEM TOWARDS THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF BABY FRIENDLY INITIATIVE.

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to request for the approval of Council for the inclusion of the revised ten steps to successful breastfeeding as part of the criteria for the registration of private health facilities in the Nigerian Health System towards the institutionalization of Baby Friendly Initiative.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Breastfeeding confers extensive and well-established benefits and is recognized as an extremely effective preventive health measure for both mothers and babies. Except in very few specific medical situations, breastfeeding should be universally encouraged for all mothers and infants.

While breastfeeding is a natural act, it is also a learned behaviour. An extensive body of research has demonstrated that mothers and other caregivers require active support for establishing and sustaining appropriate breastfeeding practices. According to the Lancet series, in 2013, Health system and community interventions can increase exclusive breastfeeding by times 2.5

The Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) was launched in 1991 to help motivate facilities providing maternity and newborn services worldwide. The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding was the foundation for the Initiative. The Ten Steps summarize a package of policies and procedures that facilities providing maternity and newborn services should implement to support breastfeeding.

The Ten Steps include the following:

Every facility providing maternity services and care for newborn infants should:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within half an hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed, and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practise rooming-in - that is, allow mothers and infants to remain together - 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers (also called dummies or soothers) to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic

In 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) began a process to re-evaluate and reinvigorate the BFHI programme. This review focused on integrating the programme more fully in the health-care system, including private and public, facilities to ensure that all facilities in a country implement the Ten Steps with an emphasis on scaling up to universal coverage and ensuring sustainability over time.

Accordingly, in 2018, WHO, UNICEF and all relevant multi stakeholders revised and modified the 10 Steps to successful breastfeeding into "**2 Critical Management Procedures and 8 key clinical practices**" as follows:

A) Critical Management Procedures

- 1a. Comply fully with the International Code of Marketing of Breast milk substitutes and relevant World Health Assembly resolutions
 - 1b. Have a written infant feeding policy that is routinely communicated to staff and parents.
 - 1c. Establish an ongoing monitoring and data management systems.
2. Ensure that staffs have sufficient knowledge, competence and skills to Breastfeeding

B) Key Clinical Practices

3. Discuss the importance and management of breastfeeding with pregnant women and their families
4. Facilitate immediate and uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact and support mothers to initiate breastfeeding as soon as possible after birth.
5. Support mothers to initiate and maintain breastfeeding and manage common difficulties.
6. Do not provide breastfed newborns any food or fluids other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Enable mothers and their infants to remain together and to practice rooming –in 24 hours a day.
8. Support mothers to recognize and respond to their infants' cues for feeding
9. Counsel mothers on the use and risks of feeding bottles, teats and pacifiers
10. Coordinate discharge so that parents and their infants have timely access to ongoing support and care.

A key step to ensure integration and Sustainability is to make registration of facilities offering maternity services dependent on adherence to a full set of clinical standards and specific management procedures as outlined in the Revised Ten Steps.

RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSAL FOR THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE TEN STEPS

There is substantial evidence that implementing the Ten Steps significantly improves breastfeeding rates. Studies have demonstrated clearly that adherence to the Ten Steps impacts early initiation of breastfeeding immediately after birth, exclusive breastfeeding and total duration of breastfeeding.

Early initiation of breastfeeding is important for both the mother and the child. Early suckling stimulates the release of prolactin, which helps in the production of milk, and oxytocin, which is responsible for the ejection of milk. It also stimulates contraction of the uterus after childbirth and reduces postpartum blood loss. The first liquid to come from

the breast, known as colostrum, is produced in the first few days after delivery. Colostrum is highly nutritious and contains antibodies that provide natural immunity to the infant.

Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months provides the nurturing, nutrients and energy needed for physical and neurological growth and development

In Nigeria, The prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding in children below the age of six months is only 25 percent, which means that at least 5 million children each year do not get the powerful health and immunological benefits of breastfeeding. With the high under-five mortality rate and high birth rate in the Country, inadequate breastfeeding leads to 103,742 child deaths each year which in turn translates into almost \$12 billion in future economic losses for the country.

Including the Ten Steps to Successful breastfeeding as part of the criteria for the registration of health care facilities providing maternity services would contribute to high prevalence of optimal breastfeeding and ultimately save lives.

3.0 PRAYERS

The Council is invited to note that:

- a. Early Initiation and exclusive breastfeeding can contribute to reduction of child morbidity and mortality if scaled up.
- b. Early Initiation and exclusive breastfeeding in Nigeria is presently low and would impact on the morbidity and mortality statistics in the country.
- c. Inclusion of the Ten (10) steps to successful breastfeeding can save lives and at minimum cost.

Council is further invited to approve:

- I. The inclusion of the critical management procedures of the ten steps to successful breastfeeding as part of the criteria for registering health care facilities which provide maternity services across the federation.

**Honourable Minister of Health,
June, 2018.**