



Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario

Co-Chair Report for 2020

Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario (BFION) is a volunteer multidisciplinary organization consisting of health care professionals, service providers and consumers within Ontario interested in protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding.

BFION is the provincial representative for the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) and partners with hospitals and community health services to assist and support them to achieve and maintain Baby-Friendly designation. BFION provides ongoing expert advice and recommendations on policy and guidelines to government, health facilities, community agencies and professional organizations through knowledge exchange and translation, advocacy, the sharing of resources, and provincial monitoring surveys.

Our mission is to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding in the province of Ontario through the adoption, implementation and maintenance of the practice standards of the Baby-Friendly Initiative. Our vision is that Ontario have a Baby-Friendly culture.

Our goals are to:

- Increase the number of BFI designated hospitals and community health services
- Support designated facilities to maintain their BFI designation
- Increase BFION membership participation
- Increase awareness and education of best practices related to infant feeding

Our current Executive members are as follows:

<i>Position</i>	<i>Executive Member</i>
Co-Chair Community	Seneca Overduin
Co-Chair Hospital	Carolyn Crowley
Past Chair	Wendy Lahey
Membership Coordinator	Linda Young
Political Advocacy Coordinator	Joan Bueckert
Social Media Coordinator	Jenny Vandermeer
BFI Ontario Assessment Committee Representative	Marg LaSalle
Treasurer	Hiltrud Dawson
Breastfeeding Committee for Canada Representative	Kathy Venter
Website Coordinator	Karen Frith
Communications Coordinator	Laura Dueck
Chair Elect- Community	Vacant

Highlights from the BCC for the past year

COVID-19 resources

The BCC released *Key messages: Infant Feeding and COVID-19* for healthcare providers in May 2020 to address issues about infant feeding during the pandemic. An update was released in January 2021 to include new information and guidance about vaccines. This excellent resource is based on the latest national and international guidelines. For members who have not yet accessed this resource, it can be found at <https://breastfeedingcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/BCC-Covid-19-and-Infant-Feeding-Key-Messages-Jan-6-2021-clean-copy.pdf>

BFI 10 Steps and WHO Code Outcome Indicators

The BCC continues their work to update the BFI 10 Steps and WHO Code Outcome Indicators. In 2020, documents were reviewed by shareholders and public consultations are currently underway. The new documents should be available publicly in 2021.

National BFI Quality Improvement Collaborative Project

The BCC continues to lead the National BFI QI Collaborative Project, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. In 2020 this program continued to provide quality improvement guidance and support to 15 healthcare organizations and 26 hospital sites across Canada to help them work towards their goals of improving exclusive breastfeeding rates and become BFI designated. In Ontario, 4 hospitals are currently participating in the Project.

Highlights from BFI Ontario for the past year

The COVID-19 pandemic

2020 was what can only be called an unprecedented year. With our membership and executive made up largely of healthcare workers, this impacted not only the work of BFI Ontario but also the work of our members. Below are highlights from the BFION executive for the 2020 calendar year.

- Only one of our BFION membership meetings was held this past year (December 2020) with others being cancelled due to the many challenges related to the pandemic. We thank those who were able to participate during this meeting as it provided an opportunity for networking and sharing of strategies for continuing to provide effective care to families. Several members shared innovative initiatives from their regions that have allowed them to continue to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the COVID context.
- Recognizing the challenges that healthcare workers were facing with ever-changing information during the pandemic, we sought to address (in a small way) the need make reliable information easily available. Reliable resources about COVID-19 and infant feeding were shared throughout the year through Mailchimp messages, our social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook) and our website (<https://www.bfiontario.ca/>).

- Yes, National Breastfeeding Week did happen! Materials to celebrate National Breastfeeding Week were shared with the membership and posted on our social media platforms in October 2020. These resources were based on the WABA theme “Support breastfeeding for a healthier planet!”
- The executive sought to engage with members about how best to meet their needs/expectations in regards to their membership. A survey to members was distributed in early 2021. One of our questions included access to video conferencing platforms now that so many of us have used these platforms at work and at home to communicate with others. We hope that asking about how we hold our meetings/events will help improve access and increase engagement among our members. Results of the survey will be discussed at the annual general meeting (AGM).
- This past year, members of the executive prepared the BFI Ontario bylaws. The bylaws are the administrative guidelines for our organization and will be presented for approval at the AGM. Other documents that support our work were also updated including our Terms of Reference, our Action Plan as well as the executive role descriptions.

BFI Designation

- As of December 31, 2020, Ontario had 30 BFI Designated facilities including seven hospitals and 23 community health services

Changes to the executive

- In 2020, we welcomed Seneca Overduin as our new Co-chair (community). She replaced Wendy Lahey who moved into the past co-chair position. We also welcomed Joan Bueckert who joined us as our advocacy coordinator. The executive wishes to thank Gillian Szollos for her past advocacy work as well as Margaret Sherratt, who finished her term as past co-chair.

BFI Ontario Expo 2020

- To our great disappointment, the BFI Ontario Expo, that was planned to celebrate our 20th anniversary as an organization, was cancelled due to COVID-19. Discussions are underway regarding planning virtual conferences or webinars in the coming year, recognizing that there is still much pandemic related work to be done in member organizations.

Executive report

Website Report – Karen Frith

Take some time to explore our website at bfiontario.ca. We are web and mobile friendly!

The BFION website is the place to go for up-to-date information about the Baby-Friendly Initiative in Ontario. Our home page has current news of interest and we have many resources about breastfeeding during the COVID outbreak.

The Members Only section has information about upcoming meetings, meeting minutes and resources that are shared by our members. If you are having an event, you can order the BFIO banner to let your networks know about us.

The past few years we have posted some National Breastfeeding Week resources to help with your celebrations. Feel free to use them!

We have had some interest in the Ontario Family Forum. This provided us the opportunity to educate about the role of BFION around the BFI in our communities and hospitals as well the role of all HCP in ensuring that families receive adequate support and information about infant feeding. This is open to anybody who would like to share their experience receiving care in a healthcare facility in Ontario. Responses can be viewed by the public as well in the Your Responses.

If you have made or updated any resources that you are willing to share with the membership, please send an email and we can make sure to put it in our “Members Only” section. Some of our resources are getting dated and it would be great to keep current resources available there! Also, contact us to advertise any upcoming educational sessions that you are offering or if you have any concerns using our website. Contact Karen at info@bfiontario.com

Communications Report – Laura Dueck

One of BFI Ontario’s goals is to facilitate accurate and timely information sharing with members regarding breastfeeding and the Baby-Friendly Initiative. Laura Dueck is the lead for BFIO communications and is responsible for taking the minutes of the Executive Meetings and supporting information sharing within the BFI Ontario membership.

Because of the pandemic and the needed focus on COVID work, our messages out to the membership were down significantly but we were still able to share over 25 messages with relevant research, resources, and information. Utilizing the MailChimp online marketing platform continues to be an effective tool in reaching over 600 membership contacts.

Assessment Coordinator Report – Marg LaSalle

Over the past year most hospitals and community health services in Ontario have been impacted by the challenges of Covid-19. Many have found new ways to provide service delivery to perinatal families and families with young children. Most have strived to continue providing service consistent with the BCC’s BFI 10 Steps and WHO Code Outcome Indicators for Hospitals and Community Health Services during these challenging times. The BFI Ontario Assessment Coordinator has provided support to many facilities over the past year through telephone calls and email communication. Assessors and assessor candidates have also played a supportive role.

No External Assessments took place in Ontario during 2020. Four facilities in Ontario were in Pre-Assessment last year.

As of December 31, 2020, Ontario has 30 designated facilities including 7 hospitals and 23 community health services. Although some previously designated hospitals and community health services in the province have decided to not be reassessed for BFI re-designation many have indicated that they intend to continue to uphold BFI principles and standards.

Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto and Halton Healthcare with Georgetown Hospital, Milton District Hospital and Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital continue with their work as part of the BCC’s Quality Improvement Collaborative Project. Kathy Venter is a consultant with the project and both she and Marg La Salle remain in close communication with Michelle LeDrew, the BFI Project Director.

Ontario currently has 2 lead assessors, 1 assessor who will begin to be mentored as a lead assessor as opportunities arise, 4 assessors and 7 assessor candidates.

All assessment work is done in close collaboration with the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. During 2020 Marg La Salle and Kathy Venter Co-Chaired the national BFI Assessment Committee. Karen Frith, assessor from Ontario, joined the BCC's Assessment Committee in November 2020.

Marg La Salle and the BFI Ontario Co-Chairs have regularly attended the BCC's P/T Committee meetings. Kathy Venter, Marg La Salle, Linda Young, Angie Manners and Yolande Lawson are members of the BCC's Board of Directors. Additionally, Kathy Venter, represents the BCC internationally at BFHI meetings.

Advocacy Report – Joan Bueckert

Within the context of the pandemic, no opportunities for targeted advocacy efforts were brought forward by the membership in 2020. Members are invited to bring issues to the executive involving the messaging around infant feeding. We are happy to connect with provincial and regional organizations, with letters, briefing notes and conversations, to provide them with information about evidence-informed best practices for all mothers and babies around infant feeding.

Membership Report – Linda Young

As the demands of the Covid-19 pandemic progressed over the past year, health care became increasingly focused on population health needs. As a consequence, the resources available to continue to enhance wellness related areas such as staff education on breastfeeding and implementation of BFI best practices have been difficult to sustain. Discussions among members at BFION meetings provided insights on the challenges staff were facing and innovative approaches that were being explored to maintain best practices in the Covid environment.

During 2020 BFI Ontario continued to provide value to members through access to resources in the Members Only section of the website, information on evolving practice recommendations related to breastfeeding and Covid-19, suggestions for social media messages to support Breastfeeding Week, updates on national and global perspectives on BFI through links with the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada and discussions at BFION meetings.

The transition to a new Membership Coordinator occurred in March 2021. To assist with this process, the BFIO Membership Coordination Processes and Procedures Guidelines were updated. Additional work on refining the guidelines and associated templates will be completed in 2021.

Membership Overview

- BFIO memberships have continued to decline somewhat in the past year. More specifically, individual memberships have decreased from 56 to 45 and group memberships have declined from 45 to 43. This change presents an opportunity for a focus on engagement and ways to ensure value to members
- Several organizations have used the PayPal method for payment with the auto renewal option which has worked well this year. When requested, an invoice has been provided to facilitate payment through required finance processes in a few organizations.

- Google docs and Mailchimp have been used to maintain and update the membership database along with PayPal for tracking payments.
- At year end, information from Mailchimp suggested that 56% of the 391 subscribed members were often engaged through the BFI Ontario emails and 7% were somewhat engaged. These rates may represent the competing demands of the workplace during the pandemic.
- A few members unsubscribed themselves during the year, often as their role responsibilities changed in the organization. Review of group membership with renewal payments provided the opportunity to adjust the group membership list.
- A BFION membership survey was conducted in February 2021 to gather information that will assist the BFI Ontario Executive with identifying ways to enhance the value of BFION membership in the coming year.

Membership Fee Structure

Both individual and group memberships have been available. Group memberships are offered to organizations at a more cost-effective rate to support enhanced involvement and collaboration by BFI teams in response to BFI Ontario communications and BFI implementation activities. The membership fee structure for 2020 as outlined below, remained the same as it was in previous years.

Overview of BFION Membership Fee Structure

Membership Category	Cost
Individual	\$20
Group (2-5 members)	\$50
Group (6-10 members)	\$100
Group (11-25 members)	\$250
Group (25+ members)	\$400

Memberships Described

During 2020 the total number of memberships (individual and group) decreased by 10 from 2019. In 2020 there were a total of 88 memberships including 45 individual and 43 group memberships. The largest change happened with individual memberships (decreased by 11) and Group B with 6 to 10 members (decreased by 3). Group A with 2 to 5 members increased by 1.

Membership Distribution by Type 2019-2020

Membership Type	2019	2020
Individual	56	45
Group A (2-5 members)	34	35
Group B (6-10 members)	9	6
Group C (11-25 members)	1	1
Group D (26+ members)	1	1
Total Memberships	101	88

BFI Ontario draws members from a broad group of stakeholders. The table below shows membership distribution by sector for the last 2 years. While health unit memberships were consistent over the time period, individual memberships from the hospital sector decreased by 2. CHCs showed a decrease of 1 for both individual and group memberships. As sector affiliation was identified for some individuals and others did not renew their membership, there was a decrease in the number of individuals with unknown affiliation. The sector distribution could be used to shape discussions on how to enhance the value and number of members from all sectors.

Membership Distribution by Sector 2019-2020

Sector	2019		2020	
	Individual	Group	Individual	Group
Public Health	6	22	6	22
Hospital	8	11	6	11
CHC	4	5	3	4
FHT	2	2	1	2
Midwives	2	0	1	0
Breastfeeding organizations	10	4	13	3
Colleges/ Universities	5	0	4	0
First Nations	0	1	0	1
Unknown	19	0	11	0
Total	56	45	45	43

Consistent with previous reports, BFI Ontario has maintained good representation from across the province with the greatest number of memberships being drawn from urban areas including Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton.

Opportunities for Consideration

The past year has shown a small continuation in the decline of memberships amid a year of many changes and challenges with Covid-19. The data from the membership survey along with the observations in this report, can be used to better understand how BFI Ontario provides value to its members, and how we might enhance that value through BFI related activities in the coming year.

Social Media Report – Jenny Vandermeer

Financial Report – Hiltrud Dawson

The BFI Ontario executive would like to thank all of our members who tirelessly supported the health and well-being of Ontario families and communities this past year. BFI Ontario will continue to do the same by protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding through the implementation of the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Initiative. We will continue to advocate for these evidence based, best practices in Ontario.

Respectfully,

Carolyn Crowley, IA, MN
BFI Ontario Co-Chair Hospital

Seneca Overduin, RM, BHSc
BFI Ontario Co-Chair Community