



Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario

Co-Chair Report for 2021

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 for Ontario to 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	Louise Guthro
Past Chair	Carolyn Crowley (resigned Oct 30, 2021)
Membership Coordinator	Linda Young
Political Advocacy Coordinator	Joan Bueckert
Social Media Coordinator	Emilie Trepanier
BFI Ontario Assessment Committee Representative	Marg La Salle
Treasurer	Hiltrud Dawson
Breastfeeding Committee for Canada Representative	Role filled by Co-Chairs
Website Coordinator	Karen Frith
Communications Coordinator	Laura Dueck
Chair Elect- Community	Shannon McLennon

Highlights from the BCC for the past year

Canadian BFI Standards

The BCC officially launched the BFI Implementation Guideline and companion documents during National Breastfeeding Week (October 1-7, 2021). The update is based on the revisions completed by WHO-UNICEF in 2018, but within a Canadian context. The documents are available in English and French and can be found on the BCC website at <https://breastfeedingcanada.ca/en/baby-friendly-initiative/>

National BFI Quality Improvement Collaborative Project

The BCC continues to lead the National BFI Quality Improvement Collaborative Project, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Throughout 2021 the program provided quality improvement guidance and support to 25 hospital sites across Canada to help them work towards their goals of improving exclusive breastfeeding rates and become BFI designated. Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto and Halton Healthcare (Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, Georgetown Hospital and Milton District Hospital) are the Ontario hospitals that participated. Throughout 2021 BFI teams did their best to move forward with BFI project work although the pandemic often overshadowed their time and priorities.

Through the BFI Project's collaboration with Accreditation Canada/Health Standards Organization (HSO), the BCC was invited to submit the National BFI Quality Improvement Collaborative Project as a HSO Leading Practice. Submission of this application occurred in December 2021. Publication of the BFI Project through HSO's Leading Practices library will reach a global audience.

National Symposium

The National BCC Baby-Friendly Initiative Symposium took place virtually from October 1-8. The theme for the 2021 Symposium was Protect, Promote and Support Breastfeeding and BFI: a Shared Responsibility. A total of 175 people were registered or invited participants and the evaluations were extremely positive with an overall average satisfaction rating of 4.63/5 stars. The program, speakers and presentations are posted on the BCC website: <https://breastfeedingcanada.ca/en/symposium-2021/>

BFI Designation Plaque

The BCC provides hospitals/birthing centres and community health services with a commemorative plaque when they achieve BFI designation. When WHO-UNICEF discontinued providing reproductions of the Picasso image, *Maternity*, BCC decided to find new imagery for the plaque. The BCC released a Request for Proposal (RFP) in August 2021 to find a suitable, original artistic work from a Canadian artist. The BCC is currently in contact with the artist who created the image that received the most favourable response and score during judging.

Highlights from BFI Ontario for the past year

The COVID-19 pandemic

2021 saw a bit of improvement in regard to COVID's impact on the work of BFI Ontario from the previous year. Below are highlights from the BFION executive for the 2021 calendar year.

- Four membership meetings plus the AGM were held this past year, including two Hot Topic Presentations and one special meeting with a presentation and discussion.

Date	Topic	Presented By
June 18, 2021	Introduction to the 'New' Baby Friendly Implementation Guideline	Marg LaSalle
September 24, 2021	What to Expect National Breastfeeding Week 2021: October 1-7	Louise Guthro
October 22, 2021 Special meeting	Highlights from BCC's National Symposium: Next Steps	Louise Guthro with discussion from membership

- Membership meeting times were shortened to one hour 12 – 1pm and are now scheduled on Fridays in response to the membership survey done early in 2021. Much of the discussion this year focused on the release of BCC's 'New' Baby-Friendly Implementation Guideline, BCC's virtual Symposium held in October and sharing of successful innovative initiatives and challenges due to the continuing pandemic. Attendance at the meetings were lower than pre-pandemic. We want to thank those who were able to participate during the meetings as it provided an opportunity for networking.
- BFI Ontario purchased a Zoom Meeting plan, which has allowed us to host both membership and executive meetings on this platform. This paid platform allows us to record presentations to be available to members who are not able to attend. This platform is evolving and a learning curve for all of us.
- Recognizing the challenges that healthcare workers were facing with ever-changing information during the pandemic, we continued to make reliable information easily available. Resources about COVID-19 vaccines and breastfeeding were shared through Mailchimp messages, our social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook) and our website (<https://www.bfiontario.ca/>).
- To recognize global and national commemorative days/weeks including the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, appropriate, supportive resources were shared through our social media platforms.
- National Breastfeeding Week was a busy week. Materials to celebrate were shared with the membership and posted on our social media platforms in October 2021. These resources were based on the WABA theme "Protect Breastfeeding. A Shared Responsibility!" We held a contest for two free annual memberships to engage membership to explore our website. BCC held a successful National Symposium virtually during this week.
- 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. Results from this survey were shared at the 2020 AGM and helped to guide updating our Action Plan this year.

- This past year, members of the executive finalized the BFI Ontario bylaws. The bylaws are the administrative guidelines for our organization that were presented and approved at the 2020 AGM. Other documents that support our work were also updated including our Terms of Reference, and our Action Plan. We are in the process of developing a new document “BFI Ontario Executive Role Descriptions, Responsibilities and Accountability” to help with onboarding and mentoring new executive members.
- As part of Goal 2 of our Action Plan, we are in the process of organizing a focus group to increase diversity of representation in the membership with more First Nations members, family health teams, physicians, midwives, doulas, mother-to-mother support and parents.

BFI Designation

- As of December 31, 2021, Ontario had 30 BFI-designated facilities including seven hospitals and 23 community health services.

Changes to the executive

- In 2021, we welcomed Louise Guthro as our new Co-chair (hospital). She replaced Carolyn Crowley who moved into the past co-chair position. We accepted Carolyn’s resignation in October 2021, and thanked her for her past work. We also welcomed Shannon McLennon as Chair Elect (community) and Emilie Trepanier as Social Media Coordinator.

BFI Ontario Expo

- With continuing pandemic related work and staffing concerns in member organizations, the biennial 2020 BFI Ontario Expo was further delayed. It was decided to revisit planning for potential Expo in fall 2022, no plans have been initiated due continued issues. We will reexamine options early in 2022.

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 BFION 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 section.

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 BFION communications and is responsible for taking the minutes of the Executive Meetings and supporting information sharing within the BFI Ontario membership.

The number of messages communicated out to the membership were similar to last year (25 emails through Mailchimp) but are fewer than before the start of the pandemic. The goal for the coming year is to capitalize on opportunities to share relevant research, resources, and information with the membership on a more frequent basis. Utilizing the Mailchimp online platform continues to be an effective tool in reaching almost 400 subscribers.

BFI Assessment Coordinator Report – Marg La Salle

The pandemic has continued to cause significant challenges for hospitals and community health services in Ontario. Many facilities have found new methods of service delivery to perinatal families and families with young children. Facilities are commended for striving to protect, promote and support breastfeeding during these unusual and difficult times.

The BFI Ontario Assessment Coordinator has continued to provide support to many facilities through telephone calls and email communication. Troubleshooting problems, facilitating extensions of self-monitoring and BFI Interim reports, and postponing assessment work have been necessary.

No Pre-assessments or External Assessments took place in Ontario during 2021. One facility had a virtual capacity building visit in 2021. Four facilities in Ontario were in Pre-assessment in 2019 and it is hoped that their Pre-assessment work will resume once the challenges of the pandemic are no longer problematic.

Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto and Halton Healthcare with Georgetown Hospital, Milton District Hospital and Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital continue with their BFI work as part of the BCC’s Quality Improvement Collaborative Project. In the spring of 2021, Halton Health Care team hosted five educational sessions for 200 of their staff. Kathy Venter facilitated the educational virtual webinars and access to the recordings of these webinars is available on the BCC’s website (Breastfeeding and BFI Educational Resources) <https://breastfeedingcanada.ca/en/resources/>.

As of December 31, 2021, 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.

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. Karen Frith joined Marg La Salle as BCC Assessment Committee co-chair in April 2021. Kathy Venter vacated the co-chair position in April 2021 and is the International Representative for the BCC.

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

Advocacy Report – Joan Bueckert

Political Advocacy during COVID has been very limited. There is no liaison at the Ontario Ministry of Health for BFI and so there has been no communication at a provincial level. Most health units have been focused on COVID and staff have been deployed to concentrate on tracing contacts and testing. Anecdotally it appears that rates of exclusive breastfeeding may have declined over the course of the pandemic but we do not have statistics to demonstrate this observation. As of March, 2022 the number of COVID cases in Ontario and across Canada have been declining so staff from perinatal programs who were deployed may soon be returning to their regular positions. There is also an election in Ontario this spring and, depending on the results, there may be changes at Queen's Park with an increased interest in BFI Ontario. One study is happening in Ontario as to the experience of babies in NICUs in the province during COVID. The results of this study may be used to promote zero separation. There was also a news release of the way that the formula industry has been knowingly influencing health care providers and parents in the marketing of their products. The Political Advocacy Coordinator plans to develop a letter to send to the Ministry of Health with concerns about these practices.

Membership Report – Linda Young

In 2021, the COVID-19 related challenges experienced by health care organizations through the 2020 year continued as the Omicron variant appeared. While immunizations seemed to mitigate the incidence of serious illness, organizations providing maternal child care found that staff shortages and turnover in both staff and leader roles, made it especially difficult to maintain knowledge and commitment to implementing and sustaining BFI best practice standards. Responses to the BFI Ontario Member Survey in February 2021 provided detailed insights into how BFION could enhance our use of social media messaging, the impact of COVID-19 on the practice environment and care delivery, the key challenges staff were experiencing during the pandemic, topics to address emerging educational needs, and additional work that BFI Ontario might consider to assist organizations with BFI implementation.

In 2021 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, activities and sample 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. Two organizations that included 4 hospitals participated in the BFI National Collaborative, a BFI implementation initiative sponsored by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and led by BCC, and BFI Ontario members were encouraged to participate in the BCC National Symposium during Breastfeeding Week in October.

A small working group from the BFION executive completed work on updating the BFION Membership Coordination Processes and Procedures Guidelines and the associated templates for communication with members.

Membership Overview

- Overall membership changes have reflected the decreasing resource allocation to support BFI implementation and sustainability. Individual memberships have increased slightly, as individual practitioners elected to have a personal membership when their organization decided not to renew their membership. Individual memberships increased from 45 to 50 and group memberships decreased from 43 to 38.
- PayPal has continued to be used effectively to maintain membership payments with a majority of members using the autopay option for renewal. Invoices continue to be issued as required by some organizations on a request basis.
- Google Docs and Mailchimp continue to be used to maintain the BFION membership database with additional emails through PayPal for confirming renewal payments. Mailchimp provides data on the level of engagement with BFI Ontario email campaigns. In 2021 the 386 recipients, 61% were identified as often engaged, 11% were sometimes engaged and 24% open emails rarely. These rates likely represent the competing demands of the workplace during the pandemic.
- Engagement data can be used to identify the need to assess whether organizations may need to update group membership lists. This step has been embedded in membership renewal process to ensure emails are reaching the most appropriate individuals.
- As in previous years a few BFI Ontario members unsubscribed themselves from Mailchimp, likely reflecting the fact that membership was no longer important to their current role.

Membership Fee Structure

There have been no changes to membership structure in 2021 and both individual and group memberships continue to be available. Group memberships support the inclusion of BFI teams to enhance benefits from working with BFI Ontario on implementing and maintaining Baby-Friendly best practice standards in the care of breastfeeding families. Outlined below is the fee structure for membership consistent with rates for 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

Over the past two years, total memberships (individual and group) remained consistent at 88. However, there was an increase in individual memberships by 5 and a decrease in Group A (2-5 members) by 4. For a few organizations, the communication link to BFI Ontario is being maintained through a new individual membership held by one of the team members. It should be noted that a number of agencies included in the data are being contacted for outstanding renewal fees, as COVID-19 related changes in priorities and staff responsibilities have made it difficult to maintain continuity with organizational contacts.

Membership Distribution by Type 2019-2021

Membership Type	2019	2020	2021
Individual	56	45	50
Group A (2-5 members)	34	35	31
Group B (6-10 members)	9	6	5
Group C (11-25 members)	1	1	1
Group D (26+ members)	1	1	1
Total Memberships	101	88	88

BFI Ontario draws members from a broad group of stakeholders. The table below shows membership distribution by sector for the last 3 years. The majority of memberships are held by the public health units and hospitals. The largest decline in memberships and the shift from group to individual memberships is evident in the public health sector. Overall memberships from community health centres and family health teams have been fairly consistent. The largest increase in individual memberships occurred in the breastfeeding organization group from 13 to 17, reflecting some change in employment status and organizational affiliation. The sector distribution may be useful for discussions on how to enhance the value of membership initiatives to all sectors to maintain continued diversity of memberships.

Membership Distribution by Sector 2019-2021

Sector	2019		2020		2021	
	Individual	Group	Individual	Group	Individual	Group
Public Health	6	22	6	22	9	16
Hospital	8	11	6	11	9	12
CHC	4	5	3	4	1	4
FHT	2	2	1	2	2	2
Midwives	2	0	1	0	1	0
Breastfeeding organizations	10	4	13	3	17	3
Colleges/ Universities	5	0	4	0	3	1
First Nations	0	1	0	1	0	0
Unknown	19	0	11	0	8	0
Total	56	45	45	43	50	38

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

Although there were some changes in membership groups, BFI Ontario has continued to sustain interest and maintain support for members during the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges of fewer resources and staffing changes. Participation in the 2021 Membership Survey was appreciated as it has provided the BFI Ontario Executive with insights regarding the impact of the pandemic and suggestions for addressing member needs in the year ahead.

Social Media Report – Emilie Trepanier

Continuing our goal to increase Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario social media presence in 2021, we've been active on 3 social media platforms. In addition to Facebook and Twitter we've added an Instagram account.

The 48 Facebook posts and stories had 13,709 reaches. Our following increased from 140 to 189 people. Our posts sparked 328 engagements including 107 share and 46 comments. Our links were clicked 826 times.

We've been less active on Twitter this year with 15 tweets. Our tweets were re-tweeted a total of 66 times and we were mentioned 9 times by other Twitter accounts.

In August an Instagram account was created. Content for Instagram & Facebook are the same and are created all at once from the Meta Business Account Publishing Tool. We have 10

Followers and we are following 7 Accounts. Our posts and stories had 113 reaches. We had a total of 24 profile visits, 12 reactions and 2 share. Our hashtag is #BFIOntario.

We've celebrated Canadian Breastfeeding Week, Black Breastfeeding Week, World Breastfeeding Week and as a new addition, Native Breastfeeding Week. We've shared quotes to be used for breastfeeding promotion. We've selected events and images to represent cultural diversities and communities. We've also shared events and job opportunities from the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. Finally, we've shared news and information including information about COVID vaccines and breastfeeding.

Our goal remains unchanged for 2022 and we're looking to continue increasing our reach and engagement. We've seen a great response to advocacy quotes and we'll run them more frequently to share WBW messages all year round.

Facebook	2021	2020	2019
Posts	48	57	38
Shared Posts	107		112
Followers (Page likes)	189	140	90
Engagement (Likes and reactions)	328		
Reach	13,709		
Link Clicks	826		
Comments	46		
Top Post: COVID Vaccine Facts (Reach: 11.6K, Likes and Reactions:114, Clicks: 636, Comments: 34, Shares 48			

Twitter	2021	2020	2019
Followers	89	84	70
Following	268	265	261
Tweets	15	33	28
Retweets	66	14	18
Mentions	9		19

Instagram	(New 08/21)	2021		
Posts		36		
Followers		10		
Following		7		
Reach		113		
Likes and Reactions		12		
Share		2		
Profile Visits		24		
Top Post: First Nation Resources (Reach: 21, Likes 3)				

Financial Report – Hiltrud Dawson

Financial Year 2020-21

For the year 2020-21 (May 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021), we had our financial documents examined and taxes filed by our accounting firm, T4Tax Services Inc, and had no taxes to pay.

Our income was:

Item	Amount	Additional Explanation
Membership Payments via Direct Deposit and Cheque	100.00	
Membership Payments via PayPal	2,960.00	
Refund	910.00	Down payment for Expo venue
Total Income	3,970.00	

Our expenses were:

Item	Amount	Additional Explanation
PayPal Refunds	80.00	
PayPal charges	107.44	
Teleconferences/Zoom	226.00	
Website	302.15	
Executive expenses	461.04	Survey Monkey Purchase
Travel expenses	0.00	
Tax services	339.00	
BCC contributions	0.00	Due to change in treasurer, BCC requested to defer payment to a later date
Total Expenses	1,515.63	

On April 30th, 2021

Total Assets	27,000.00
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Current Year

For the year 2021-2022 (May 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022), our account statements are still preliminary. After April 30th, our accounts will be verified by the accountant from T4Tax Services Inc.

At this point (March 7,2022), our income is:

Item	Amount	Additional Explanation
Membership Payments via Direct Deposit and Cheque	0.00	
Membership Payments via PayPal	1,570.00	
Total Income	1,570.00	

Our expenses were:

Item	Amount	Additional Explanation
PayPal charges	59.33	
Telephone/Zoom	0.00	
Website	302.15	Annual hosting and maintenance
Executive expenses	0.00	
Tax services	678.00	
BCC contributions	0.00	
Current Total	1,039.48	

On March 7, 2022, our accounts held the following amounts.

Assets	Amount
PayPal	1,776.78
Bank of Montreal	25,840.64
Total	27,617.42

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,

Louise Guthro, RN, IBCLC
BFI Ontario Co-Chair Hospital

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