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For Healthcare Providers: Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV

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Image



Table of contents

- [About BEEEBAH](#)
- [Add Your Practice: Supportive Provider Listings](#)
- [Learn: Provider Education Sessions](#)
- [Listen: Expert Conversations](#)
- [Engage: News and Articles](#)
- [Educate: Printed Material for Clients](#)

About BEEEBAH

Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV (BEEEBAH) is a comprehensive, multi-tiered project expanding upon The Well Project's efforts to increase knowledge and access to information around breast/chestfeeding* and HIV.

[View a compilation of all The Well Project's work on breast/chestfeeding and HIV since 2018](#)

If you are interested in being in conversation with colleagues on this topic and receiving updates from the field, please email The Well Project's editorial director, [Olivia Ford](#), to be added to the HIV and Infant feeding listserv.

Supportive Provider Listings

Please allow several weeks for these pages to be updated with the information you submit. **Please be**

aware that these listings are self-reported, and that The Well Project is unable to review each entry for accuracy.

[List of US-Based Providers who Support Informed Infant Feeding Choices for Parents with HIV](#)

The Well Project maintains a list, by specialty, of health and service providers (based primarily in the US) who already consider themselves to be knowledgeable and affirming regarding the information, support, and tools necessary to help parents living with HIV make informed infant-feeding decisions. If this description fits your practice and you would like your name, organization, or clinic to be added to this resource list, please carefully fill out the form at this link to "[Add Your Information to The Well Project's List of Resources and Providers who Support Informed Breast/Chestfeeding Decision-Making for Parents Living with HIV.](#)"

[List of HIV-Friendly Reproductive Services and Providers in the US](#)

If you are an HIV-friendly provider of broader reproductive healthcare or services and would like your name, organization, or clinic to be added to a resource list for community members searching for such a provider, please carefully fill out the form at this link to "[Add Your Information to The Well Project's List of HIV-Friendly Reproductive Services and Providers in the US.](#)"

Provider Education Sessions

Perinatal HIV Roundtables

[The HIV and Infant Feeding Guidelines at Six Months: Perspectives from National Leaders \(2023\)](#)

For the second year in a row, The Well Project and the National Clinician Consultation Center (home of the National Perinatal HIV Hotline) co-hosted this event featuring panelists from the Health Resources and Services Administration, the American Academy of HIV Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and more. Panelists discussed how these organizations plan to adjust to, address, and implement the new HIV and infant feeding guidance.

[Updates in Breast/Chestfeeding: Parent Perspectives and Evolving Practice \(2022\)](#)

Co-presented with The Well Project, this panel discussion featured physicians and a legal professional engaged with supporting parents living with HIV in their infant-feeding journeys, in paired conversation with Black women advocates living with HIV who have navigated those journeys.

Research Reports and Conference Presentations

[Updated Infant Feeding Recommendations for US Parents Living with HIV: Empowering Patient/Provider Partnership & Communication \(PDF\)](#)

While strides have been made in disseminating impactful 2023 updates to the infant-feeding guidance in the US Perinatal HIV Clinical Guidelines, gaps in awareness of these changes remain. Co-authors Ciarra Covin and Olivia G. Ford presented a poster on The Well Project's findings to this effect at the 2024 National Ryan White Conference on HIV Care & Treatment in Washington, DC, in August 2024.

[Read Ciarra Covin's first-person account of presenting at the conference](#)

[The Well Project Survey Reveals Dramatic Shift in Provider Support of](#)

[Breast/Chestfeeding After 2023 HIV Guideline Updates](#)

Groundbreaking updates to US HIV and infant feeding guidance have led healthcare providers to report favorable changes in support for women and other birthing parents living with HIV who are interested in breast/chestfeeding, according to a survey conducted by The Well Project. Read the report and download shareable infographics highlighting these exciting findings.

[Listening to Women: Supporting Informed Decision-Making on Infant Feeding and HIV](#)

Image



The Well Project program manager Ciarra Covin was presenting author for this poster at the International Workshop on HIV & Women 2023 in Seattle, Washington, February 17-18, 2023. This collaborative poster presented data from The Well Project's 2021 survey of US women living with HIV responding to questions about infant feeding, alongside qualitative results from Nourish-UK's similarly sized sample of women living with HIV in the UK who were interviewed about how they chose to feed their babies.

[Breastfeeding & HIV in the US and Canada: Centering Women's Lived Experiences Into the Clinical, Research and Policy Discussion](#)

The Well Project's executive director, Krista Martel, delivered this virtual conference presentation at the International Workshop on HIV & Women in 2021.

[Breastfeeding and HIV in the U=U Era: Advancing Conversation and Community](#)

[Awareness](#)

This webinar, in partnership with the Sero Project, reprised the popular session of the same name from June 2021's virtual HIV is Not a Crime (HINAC) National Training Academy. Panelists from The Well Project, the International Community of Women Living with HIV – North America, and The Center for HIV Law and Policy discussed the intersections of HIV, infant feeding, and state intervention.

Expert Conversations

Leadership Exchange LIVE: BEEEEBAH Edition

A streaming video series featuring live, interactive conversations between thoughtleaders on infant feeding and HIV exploring one another's work, activism, and personal experiences. Hosted by Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin – The Well Project's program manager, an internationally recognized advocate on this topic, and a past breastfeeding parent living with HIV.

[Updates to the Perinatal HIV Clinical Guidelines!](#)

Featuring: Lealah Pollock, MD, MS (University of California, San Francisco)

Watch this powerful discussion of recent updates to the Perinatal HIV Clinical Guidelines, between a member of the clinical guidelines panel and an advocate who advised the panel during the update process.

[Breastfeeding, HIV, and Criminalization: Legal Considerations from a US Attorney](#)

Featuring: Catherine Hanssens (The Center for HIV Law and Policy)

Hear insights from an attorney who has been active on HIV legal and policy issues since 1984.

[The Big Picture: Health Implications and Bioethical Considerations of Breastfeeding and HIV](#)

Featuring: Marielle Gross, MD, MBE (University of Pittsburgh/Johns Hopkins)

Covin and Gross have [shared a stage to talk about breast/chestfeeding and HIV before](#); the two reconnected to discuss race, maternal health, and ethics around infant feeding and HIV.

[Breastfeeding and HIV: Viewpoints from an Adult and Pediatric Provider](#)

Featuring: Allison Agwu, MD, ScM (Johns Hopkins)

Covin related her personal experiences as a woman living with HIV, new parent, and advocate; Agwu shared insights from her work caring for women living with HIV across the lifespan (from pediatrics to adults), including women who choose to breastfeed.

Other Videos and Podcasts

[It's Time to Embrace Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding for US People With HIV](#)

On this episode of The Future of HIV Care, a monthly podcast from TheBodyPro, physician Lealah Pollock, MD, and advocate Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin explain how recent changes to US perinatal HIV guidelines reveal an important shift in how we fundamentally approach the clinician-patient relationship with pregnant and infant-feeding people who are living with HIV.

HIV and Infant Feeding Listserv

We invite group members to post resources, updates, and questions related to HIV and infant feeding, including breast/chestfeeding. To join, please email The Well Project's editorial director, [Olivia Ford](#).

News and Articles

[Patient Perspective by Ciarra Covin Published in the Journal HIV Research and Clinical Practice](#)

Read a journal article by The Well Project's Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin titled "Parenting with HIV: a Patient's View on Updated Infant Feeding Guidelines in the US," about the experience of and updated guidance around breast/chestfeeding.

[The Well Project Welcomes Pediatric Guideline Updates on Infant Feeding and HIV in the US](#)

Updated infant feeding guidance from the premier US pediatric provider group stresses a "family-centered, nonjudgmental" approach to support parents living with HIV who want to breast/chestfeed and are taking effective HIV treatment.

[The Well Project Applauds Updates to Perinatal HIV Clinical Guidelines around Breast/Chestfeeding for Women and Other Birthing Parents Living with HIV](#)

As a result of years of advocacy by women living with HIV, providers, and others – including The Well Project – updates to the *US Perinatal HIV Clinical Guidelines* on January 31, 2023, assert the need for increased support from providers for parents' infant-feeding choices. The guideline updates state the likelihood of transmission if the birthing parent has an undetectable viral load and is taking HIV drugs (less than 1 percent); provide more detailed information on the potential benefits of breast/chestfeeding; and offer guidance for providers counseling birthing parents around their infant-feeding options.

Printed Material for Clients

Updates to the HIV and Infant Feeding Guidelines in the US

The January 2023 updates to the US Department of Health and Human Services' HIV and infant feeding guidelines assert the need for shared decision-making and increased support from providers around parents' infant-feeding choices. The American Academy of Pediatrics followed in May 2024, releasing similarly updated guidance. Share, download, or print this two-sided postcard highlighting key updates in both sets of guidelines.

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Updates to the HIV and Infant Feeding Guidelines in the US

In January 2023, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued sweeping updates to the "Infant Feeding" section of their Perinatal HIV Clinical Guidelines. The updates, which the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also supports, assert the need for **shared decision-making and increased support from providers around parents' infant-feeding choices**.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) followed HHS in May 2024, releasing similarly updated guidance stressing a **"family-centered, nonjudgmental, harm reduction" approach** to infant-feeding discussions.

These modifications represent a significant accomplishment for advocates, including The Well Project, who have been working for years on various levels to effect these changes. The Well Project is especially excited that both sets of guidelines **discourage engagement with Child Protective Services (CPS) or similar agencies in response to the infant-feeding intentions of women and other parents living with HIV.**

Visit us at www.thewellproject.org to access the updated guidelines for infant feeding and HIV

SCAN QR CODE

Quote: "To see that the voices of those of us living with HIV have been able to invoke change on this level is inspiring. It now feels as if we are one step closer to decriminalizing breast/chestfeeding among parents living with HIV since the guidelines specifically recommend against calling CPS."
—Ciera "Ci Ci" Coats, senior manager of community programming at The Well Project and a woman living with HIV who breastfed her youngest child

Key updates in the guidelines include:

- Guidance to counsel birthing parents living with HIV around their infant-feeding options replaces previous recommendations against breastfeeding
- Clearer guidance on transmission rates if the birthing parent has an undetectable viral load and is taking HIV medications (less than 1 percent)
- Detailed information on the potential health benefits of breast/chestfeeding
- Caution to not engage Child Protective Services in response to infant-feeding decisions
- Details guiding care management to reduce HIV transmission risk if a parent decides to breast/chestfeed
- Equity considerations in caring for Black families and other families of color who are unduly affected by HIV, social determinants of health, and conditions that may be alleviated by breast/chestfeeding
- Guidance for transgender and gender-diverse people who desire to breast/chestfeed (HHS only)

BEEEBAH (Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV) is

POSITIVE ACTION

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to access our BEEEBAH educational resources on infant feeding and HIV

Quote: "As a pediatrician, I welcome the new version of infant-feeding guidelines for providers caring for people living with HIV by HHS... This well-needed update uses available global evidence to advocate for shared provider/patient decision-making and patient-centered approach, which has the potential to reduce HIV-associated stigma and improve quality of life among people living with HIV."
—Natalia Robinson, MD, PhD, director of HIV services at Children's National Hospital, Washington, DC, and chair of AAP's Committee on Pediatric and Adolescent HIV

Click the images above to save as jpegs or share online; or [download a printable pdf of this resource](#)

["Get the Facts on Breast/Chestfeeding and HIV" Pamphlet](#)

Get key facts about breast/chestfeeding and HIV at your fingertips! From snapshots of the latest research and current guidelines to a direct link for support in talking with providers about infant feeding, this pocket-sized folding pamphlet packs vital information into an attractive, readable format. The pamphlet is a helpful resource to share at conferences and community events, in clinic waiting rooms – anywhere women and other potential parents living with HIV are served. ([Disponible en español](#))



www.thewellproject.org



Did you know?

If a woman living with HIV has a sustained **UNDETECTABLE VIRAL LOAD**, the chance of transmitting HIV through breastfeeding **IS LESS THAN 1%**.



In the US and other high-resource countries, **GUIDELINES RECOMMEND PROVIDERS SUPPORT A PARENT'S DECISION TO BREASTFEED.**

BEEBAH: BUILDING EQUITY, ETHICS, AND EDUCATION ON BREASTFEEDING AND HIV

How can parents living with HIV help keep their babies HIV-negative while breast/chestfeeding?



When a parent living with HIV chooses to breast /chestfeed, support is fundamental!



“All I wanted to do was feed my baby. I was not seeking approval, I just needed support.”

—CIARRA COVIN

“Support from my infectious disease doctor and partner is what allowed me to be successful in breastfeeding both of my children.”

—HEATHER O'CONNOR

“As a woman born with HIV, I can tell you how vital it is to empower women living with HIV to feel free to have children and feed them as they see best.”

—PORCHIA DEES



BEEBAH (Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV) is supported by a grant from Viiv Healthcare's Positive Action for Women Initiative

Tools to help you talk to your provider



Scan the QR code

to access talking points and other resources that can support conversations with your providers about your infant-feeding options.

www.thewellproject.org



Visit The Well Project

to access evidence-based fact sheets and other educational programming; community support; advocacy and leadership development; collaborative engagement; and women-focused research!

Join our dynamic community of women living with and vulnerable to HIV at: www.thewellproject.org



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Click the image above to save as a jpeg or share online; or [download a printable pdf of this resource](#)

[Fill out this form](#) to have **free** copies of this pamphlet and other educational materials shipped to your organization or practice!

En español

Actualizaciones de las guías sobre el VIH y la alimentación infantil en EE.UU.

Las actualizaciones de enero de 2023 de las guías sobre el VIH y la alimentación infantil del Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de EE.UU. afirman la necesidad de una toma de decisiones compartida y de un mayor apoyo por parte de los proveedores en torno a las opciones de alimentación infantil de padres. La Academia Estadounidense de Pediatría le siguió en mayo de 2024, publicando unas directrices actualizadas similares. Comparta, descargue o imprima esta postal de doble cara en la que se hace hincapié en las actualizaciones clave de ambos conjuntos de directrices.

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Actualizaciones en las Guías de Alimentación Infantil en EE.UU.

En enero de 2023, el Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de EE.UU. (HHS) publicó unas actualizaciones radicales de la sección "Alimentación infantil" de sus guías clínicas perinatales sobre el VIH. Las actualizaciones, que también apoyan los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades de EE.UU., afirman la necesidad de una **toma de decisiones compartida y un mayor apoyo de los proveedores en torno a las opciones de alimentación infantil para padres.**

La Academia Americana de Pediatría (AAP) siguió los pasos del HHS en mayo de 2024, publicando recomendaciones igualmente actualizadas que hacen hincapié en un enfoque **"centrado en la familia, sin prejuicios y de reducción de daños"** en conversaciones sobre la alimentación del lactante.

Estas modificaciones representan un logro importante para los defensores, incluido The Well Project, que llevan años trabajando a diversos niveles para conseguir estos cambios. The Well Project está especialmente entusiasmado por el hecho de que ambos conjuntos de directrices **desacostumbran la intervención de los Servicios de Protección de Menores ("CPS")**, por sus siglos en inglés) o agencias similares en respuesta a las intenciones de amamantar a los bebés de las mujeres y otros padres que viven con VIH.

Visítanos en www.thewellproject.org

ESCANEAR CÓDIGO QR para acceder a las guías actualizadas sobre alimentación infantil y VIH

“ Ver que los casos de quienes utilizan con VIH han sido capaces de impulsar un cambio a este nivel es inspirador. Ahora se abre como si estuvieran en un punto ciego de "normalizar la lactancia" dar el pecho entre los padres que viven con VIH, ya que las directrices recomendarían específicamente no fumar o CPS. **”**

Clara "Cl" Cavin, directora de programación comunitaria de The Well Project y mujer viviente con VIH que amamanta a su hijo menor

Las actualizaciones clave de las directrices incluyen:

- Orientación para asesorar a los padres que dan a luz y viven con VIH sobre sus opciones de alimentación infantil, que sustituye a las anteriores recomendaciones contra la lactancia
- Una orientación más clara sobre las tasas de transmisión si la persona que da a luz tiene una carga viral indetectable y está tomando medicamentos para el VIH (menos del 1%).
- Información detallada sobre los posibles beneficios para la salud asociados a la lactancia/dar el pecho
- Precaución de no recurrir a los Servicios de Protección de Menores en respuesta a las decisiones sobre alimentación infantil
- Detalles que orientan la gestión de los cuidados para reducir el riesgo de transmisión del VIH si uno de los padres decide amamantar/ dar el pecho
- Consideraciones de equidad en la atención de familias negras y otras familias de color que se ven indebidamente afectadas por el VIH, los determinantes sociales de la salud y las afecciones que pueden aliviarse con la lactancia/dar el pecho.
- Orientación para personas transgénero y con diversidad de género que desean amamantar/dar el pecho (sólo HHS)

BEEBAY (Centrar la equidad, la ética y la educación sobre la lactancia y el VIH)

POSITIVE ACTION **VIH**

ESCANEAR CÓDIGO QR para acceder a nuestros recursos educativos BEEBAY sobre alimentación infantil y VIH

“ Como pediatra...celebro la nueva revisión de las guías de alimentación infantil del HHS para proveedores que atienden a personas vivientes con VIH...Esta actualización nos recuerda cuáles son las pruebas científicas disponibles para abogar por una toma de decisiones compartida entre el proveedor y el paciente, lo que tiene el potencial de reducir el estigma asociado al VIH/mejorar la calidad de vida entre las personas vivientes con VIH. **”**

Natella Rahnemai, MD, PhD, directora de los servicios para el VIH en el Hospital Nacional Infantil de Washington, DC, y presidenta del Comité de la AAP sobre el VIH en Pediatría y Adolescencia

Haga clic en las imágenes de arriba para guardarlas como jpeg o compartirlas en línea; o [descargue un pdf imprimible de este recurso](#)

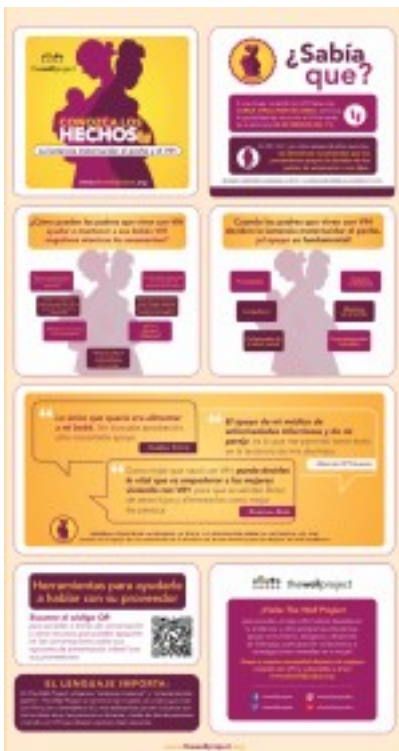
[Recursos para hablar sobre la lactancia y el VIH con su proveedor de atención de la](#)

[salud](#)

Obtenga más información sobre la lactancia y el VIH, preguntas que puede utilizar para iniciar esta discusión con los proveedores médicos, y historias de mujeres que viven con VIH que han amamantado a sus bebés.

[Folleto "Conozca los hechos sobre la lactancia materna/dar el pecho y el VIH"](#)

Image



Tenga al alcance de la mano los datos clave sobre la lactancia/dar el pecho y el VIH. Desde resúmenes de las últimas investigaciones y guías actuales hasta un enlace directo de apoyo para hablar con sus proveedores sobre la alimentación infantil, este folleto de tamaño bolsillo reúne información vital en un formato atractivo y legible. El folleto es un recurso útil para compartir en conferencias y eventos comunitarios, en las salas de espera de las clínicas y en cualquier lugar en el que se atienda a mujeres y otros posibles padres viviendo con VIH.

Haga clic en la imagen de la izquierda para guardarla como jpeg o compartirla en línea; o [descargue un pdf imprimible de este recurso](#)

[Llene este formulario](#) para obtener copias gratuitas de este folleto y otros materiales educativos enviadas a su organización o consultorio

**The language we use around this work includes both "breastfeeding" and "breast/chestfeeding." While our organization focuses on cis and trans women living with HIV, we strive to include trans men, nonbinary individuals, and others living with HIV who wish to explore feeding a child from their body.*

We acknowledge that there are multiple terms to describe this process.

BEEBAH has received initial grant funding from ViiV Healthcare's Positive Action for Women initiative.



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