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

Submitted on Apr 1, 2024

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## 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 Posters and Conference Presentations**

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

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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**

### [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**

### ["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.

Image

**GET THE FACTS**  
Breast/Chestfeeding and HIV

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-income countries, **GUIDELINES RECOMMEND PROVIDERS SUPPORT A PARENT'S DECISION TO BREASTFEED.**

BRASIL: BRASIL CONTRA A AIDS, ASSOCIAÇÃO DE BRASILEIROS DE HIV

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

- Using antiretroviral medication
- Ensuring adequate and appropriate nutrition and baby stimulation
- Monitoring of the baby
- Ensuring breast/chestfeeding up to 6 months
- Ensuring proper use of formula
- Ensuring proper use of breast pumps
- Ensuring proper use of sterilization
- Support/Emotional Support

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

- Provider
- Family members
- Peers
- Mental health professionals
- Support Partners/Co-Parents

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

**“Support from my infectious disease doctor and partner is what allowed me to be successful in breastfeeding both of my children.”**  
—Marissa D’Cruz

**“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.”**  
—Patricia Diaz

RESEARCH Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV is supported by a grant from VIV 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 science-focused research!

Join our dynamic community of science living with and vulnerable to HIV at: [www.thewellproject.org](http://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 shipped to your organization or practice!

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

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.

Image

**CONOZCA LOS HECHOS**  
La lactancia materna/dar el pecho y el VIH  
www.thewellproject.org

**¿Sabía que?**  
Si una mujer viviendo con VIH tiene una CARGA VIRAL DETECTABLE, continue la probabilidad de transmitir el VIH a través de la lactancia ES DE MENOS DEL 1%.  
En EE. UU. y en otros países de altos recursos, las directrices recomiendan que los proveedores apoyen la decisión de los padres de amamantar a sus hijos.  
MIRIAM CONSTRUYE LA BUENAS, LA ÉTICA Y LA EDUCACIÓN SOBRE LA LACTANCIA Y EL VIH: cuenta con el apoyo de una comunidad de la Sociedad de Acción Positiva para las Mujeres de VIH Positivas

**¿Cómo pueden los padres que viven con VIH ayudar a mantener a sus bebés VIH negativos mientras los amamantan?**  
- Tener la información para tomar mejores decisiones.  
- Mantener un buen estado de salud.  
- Mantener un buen estado emocional.  
- Mantener un buen estado físico.  
- Mantener un buen estado de salud mental.  
- Mantener un buen estado de salud física.  
- Mantener un buen estado de salud emocional.  
- Mantener un buen estado de salud física.  
- Mantener un buen estado de salud emocional.

**Cuando los padres que viven con VIH deciden la lactancia materna/dar el pecho, ¿el apoyo es fundamental!**  
- Proveedores  
- Familiares  
- Compañeros  
- Profesores de la salud mental  
- Espacios de lactancia  
- Miembros de la familia  
- Grupos de apoyo

**“Lo único que quería era alimentar a mi bebé. No buscaba aprobación, sólo necesitaba apoyo.”**  
-DARRE COYNE

**“El apoyo de mi médico de enfermedades infecciosas y de mi pareja es lo que me permitió tener éxito en la lactancia de mis dos hijos.”**  
-HEATHER O'CONNOR

**“Como mujer que nació con VIH, puedo decirles lo vital que es empoderar a las mujeres viviendo con VIH para que se sientan libres de tener hijos y alimentarlos como mejor les parezca.”**  
-PATRICIA DAVIS

**Herramientas para ayudarle a hablar con su proveedor**  
Escanee el código QR para acceder a foros de conversación y otros recursos que pueden ayudarle en las conversaciones sobre sus opciones de alimentación infantil con sus proveedores.

**EL LENGUAJE IMPORTA:**  
En The Well Project utilizamos “decisiones informadas” y “amamantar/dar pecho”. The Well Project se centra en las mujeres cis y trans que viven con VIH y son vulnerables a él, y nos enfocamos por ser inclusivos con las hembras trans, las personas no binarias y todas las demás personas viviendo con VIH que desean explorar estas opciones.

**¡Visite The Well Project**  
para acceder a hojas informativas basadas en la evidencia y otros programas educativos, apoyo comunitario, alianza y desarrollo de liderazgo, participación colaborativa e investigaciones centradas en la mujer.  
Únase a nuestra comunidad dinámica de mujeres viviendo con VIH y vulnerables a él en [www.thewellproject.org](http://www.thewellproject.org)

www.thewellproject.org



Haga clic en la imagen de arriba 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 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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