

Breastfeeding Volume  
Peer Counseling Section

Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Social Media (6.01600)

ER# 6.01600

Authority:

Issued: 10/13

Revised:

**POLICY:** Local WIC agencies may use social media (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, etc.) to provide evidence based breastfeeding information and to promote WIC services and Breastfeeding Peer Counseling. Social media sites facilitated by peer counselors must be monitored by the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator or other designated professional staff to ensure all content is appropriate and evidenced based. Peer counselors shall not use their personal social media accounts to represent their local WIC agency or Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program.

**PROCEDURES:**

- A. Social media networks shall be used for:
1. Promoting WIC services.
  2. Inviting participants to prenatal breastfeeding classes or support groups.
  3. Advertising breastfeeding promotion events.
  4. Promoting the fully breastfeeding food package.
  5. Providing evidence-based breastfeeding information and resources.
  6. Helping new mothers connect with peer counselors.
- B. Breastfeeding peer counselors shall be responsible for what they write and the messages conveyed to WIC participants.
1. Local WIC provider staff, including peer counselors, must follow the Participant Confidentiality Policy ER# 1.01700 and shall not post any WIC participant information.
  2. Only local WIC provider address or phone numbers shall be provided through social media. Peer counselors shall not provide personal information, such as home address or phone number.
  3. Local WIC provider social media sites shall only be used for WIC-related business.
  4. All breastfeeding information and website links posted on a social media site shall be evidenced-based and in line with information provided by the state WIC Program and provided in the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling training.
  5. The BFPC Coordinator or another other designated professional staff member must monitor all information posted through social media and have full access to the account.
  6. All information posted on social media shall be culturally sensitive and professional. Items or information related to religion or politics shall not be posted.

7. Disparaging remarks about an individual or healthcare provider will not be tolerated and can result in termination of a peer counselor or loss of Breastfeeding Peer Counseling funding.
8. Social media sites must include “This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer” statement.
9. The local WIC provider Facebook page must include a disclaimer that advice from other moms should never replace the advice from medical experts. If they have questions or concerns about their health or the baby’s well-being they should always contact their physician or a lactation consultant.
10. Social media shall not be used to advertise or promote specific product brands.
11. Peer counselors shall not counsel moms or answer detailed breastfeeding questions through social media. Peer counselors should ask when they can contact the participant by phone or invite the participant into the WIC clinic to discuss in more detail.
12. Peer counselors shall not use their personal social media accounts to represent their local WIC agency or Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program.
13. It is the responsibility of the BFPC Program Coordinator that peer counselors who are representing their local agency through social media have read and understands the social media policy and consequences for not following the policy.

#### GUIDELINES:

- A. Considerations when using Facebook
  1. A “Facebook Page” can be set up for anyone to “like” to provide information to a large number of people. If this page cannot be monitored frequently throughout the day, it is not recommended to allow the public to make posts.
  2. A “Facebook Group” can be set up for a small number of people which will allow for more interaction and discussion. Groups are not recommended if local WIC agency personnel are not available to monitor discussions. Participation should be by invitation and a participant should not be made a member without their knowledge.
- B. Peer counselors should be encouraged to not “Friend” participants on their personal Facebook page. In small communities it may be difficult to prevent, but peer counselors should be cautious in becoming a Facebook “Friend” with a participant.
- C. When posting messages consider the following:
  1. Experts suggest that posts are viewed more during the week than on weekends. Fridays have the least number of views.
  2. Post often to keep audience engaged, but not too often. It is recommended to not post more than 1 to 2 times per day. Quality of posts is more important than quantity.
  3. Keep messages short and simple.
  4. Use acronyms that everyone understands or spell out acronyms that could cause confusion.
- D. Promote your social media sites

1. Provide links through your local WIC agency web page.
2. Provide information on referral lists and other handouts.
3. Promote in your clinic with signs and word of mouth.