BEEEBAH (Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV) [1]

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About BEEEBAH

Welcome to BEEEBAH (Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV)! This comprehensive, multi-tiered project expands upon The Well Project’s efforts to increase knowledge and expand access to information around breast/chestfeeding* and HIV. Through educational resource creation, leadership development, and collaborative efforts, BEEEBAH strives to ensure that women living with HIV can experience their fundamental right to make informed, supported, uncoerced infant-feeding decisions.

BEEEBAH addresses a number of key programmatic goals identified in 2020's Expert Consensus Statement on Breastfeeding* and HIV in the United States and Canada [2]. Launched in December 2021, the program is part of our endeavors to address the lack of women-specific information and representation across all areas of HIV prevention, care, research, and policy.

View a compilation of all The Well Project's work on breast/chestfeeding and HIV since 2018 [3]

We add new content to this page regularly as programs are rolled out - so please check back often for new educational and multi-media programs that we hope you will share widely! If you are interested in joining the HIV and Infant feeding listserv for updates, please email The Well Project's editorial director Olivia Ford [4].

Expert Conversations

Leadership Exchange LIVE: BEEEBAH Edition

Leadership Exchange LIVE: BEEEBAH Edition features live, interactive conversations between thoughtleaders on infant feeding and HIV exploring one another's work, activism, and personal experiences.

Breastfeeding, HIV, and Criminalization: Legal Considerations from a US Attorney [5]

The third session of our Leadership Exchange LIVE: BEEEBAH edition features Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin (The Well Project) and Catherine Hanssens (The Center for HIV Law and Policy). Ci Ci relates her personal experiences as a woman living with HIV, new parent, and advocate; Catherine shares insights from her work as an attorney who has been active in HIV legal and policy issues since 1984.

The Big Picture: Health Implications and Bioethical Considerations of Breastfeeding and HIV [6]

For our second session of Leadership Exchange LIVE: BEEEBAH Edition, The Well Project's Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin was joined by Marielle Gross, MD, MBE, an OB/GYN and bioethicist at the University of Pittsburgh and Johns Hopkins. Ci Ci and Marielle have shared a stage to talk about breast/chestfeeding and HIV before [7]; the two reconnected to discuss race, maternal health, and ethics around infant feeding and HIV - including supporting parents living with HIV to engage in shared, informed infant feeding decision-making.

Breastfeeding and HIV: Viewpoints from an Adult and Pediatric Provider [8]

In the inaugural session of Leadership Exchange LIVE: BEEEBAH Edition, The Well Project's Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin sat down with pediatric and adult infectious disease physician Allison Agwu, MD, ScM, of 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.

Watch on our Facebook page [9] or via YouTube [10]

Infographics and Educational Guides

Resources to Talk to Your Provider about Breastfeeding and HIV [11]

Find out more about breast/chestfeeding and HIV, ways to discuss this option with healthcare providers, and stories from women living with HIV who have breastfed their babies.

Did You Know? Infographics

Click the images below to save and share as jpeg images
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%**.

While US guidelines don’t recommend breastfeeding with HIV, they **DO** recommend **PROVIDERS SUPPORT A PARENT'S DECISION TO BREASTFEED**.

Source: HHS Perinatal HIV Treatment Guidelines

BUILDING EQUITY, ETHICS, AND EDUCATION ON BREASTFEEDING AND HIV (BEEEBAH)
How can parents living with HIV help keep their babies HIV-negative while breast/chestfeeding?

- Taking HIV medications as prescribed
- Exclusive breast/chest feeding up to 6 months
- Early planning with health care team
- Attending all health care appointments for parent and baby
- Preventative medication to baby after birth
- Maintaining an undetectable viral load
- Support, support, support!
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.”

– Breastfeeding mother living with HIV

Projects with Our Partners

Breast/Chestfeeding and HIV in the US: A Listening Session with National Advocates

This webinar brought together women leaders from US-based organizations to provide updates about community-driven efforts underway to expand knowledge around breast/chestfeeding with HIV, promote provider support for parents living with HIV, change policies to reflect current evidence – and how others can get involved. Featured speakers included:

- Cynthia Gutierrez, [HIVE](https://www.thehivexchange.org) [15]
- Martha Cameron, [International Community of Women Living with HIV - North America (ICW-NA)](https://icwna.org) [16]
- Davina Conner, [Prevention Access Campaign](https://www.preventionaccesscampaign.org) [17]
- D'Andra Willis, [The Afiya Center](https://www.afiya-center.org) [18]
Catherine Hanssens, The Center for HIV Law & Policy [19]
Aryah Lester, Transgender Strategy Center [21]

View the chat [22] that took place during the session

Order Materials

"Get the Facts on Breast/Chestfeeding and HIV" Pamphlet [23]

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.
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.

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(https://www.thewellproject.org)

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

- Early infant diagnosis
- Early and frequent feeding
- HIV-negative formula
- Paternal breast/chestfeeding
- Emotional support
- Support groups

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

- Providers
- Peers
- Family members
- Mental health professionals
- Support groups

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.

— Porsha Dixie

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

Tools to help you talk to your provider

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

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
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Click the image above to save as a jpeg or share online; or download a printable pdf of this resource [25]

Fill out this form [23] to have free copies of this pamphlet shipped to your organization or practice!

*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.

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

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**Source**

**URL:** https://www.thewellproject.org/hiv-information/beeebah-building-equity-ethics-and-education-breastfeeding-and-hiv

**Links**

[5] https://fb.watch/dEQG2uyDFX/
[8] https://fb.watch/aCUwkuRLsr/
[17] https://www.thewellproject.org/partners/prevention-access-campaign
[18] https://www.thewellproject.org/partners/afiya-center
[20]