

PRAMS Data to Action

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a joint research project between the Tennessee Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Our purpose is to find out why some babies are born healthy and others are not.

Tennessee PRAMS: Increasing Breastfeeding Initiation Rates via Data Sharing at the Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition

Breast milk is extremely beneficial to a child, it provides optimal nutrition, helps fight against childhood diseases and childhood obesity, reduces healthcare costs, and is free and convenient. In Tennessee, the overall breastfeeding initiation rates have continuously increased from 2013-2017. However in 2017, TN breastfeeding initiation rates (80.9%) fell below national rates (83.9 %). It is essential to understand the challenges or barriers that prevent mothers from effectively initiating and continuing breastfeeding their newborn babies. In early November 2018, the Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition held a Strategic Planning and State Update Meeting to understand what challenges mothers could potentially face when breastfeeding. Using 2012-2016 PRAMS data, the Tennessee Department of Health's (TDH) Family Health and Wellness (FHW) division provided TN PRAMS breastfeeding indicators for the Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition.

Since its inception in 2006, Tennessee PRAMS has partnered with FHW to provide information on the prevalence of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs affecting the health of Tennessee mothers and their infants. This information has been important for FHW's program planning and development. Additionally, a non-profit organization called Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition (TBC) aims to increase breastfeeding initiation rates and help mothers overcome challenges they may face in the hospital, when they go home, or return to work. The TBC led the organization of an annual strategic planning and state update meeting, and in attendance were the Memphis and Nashville breastfeeding coalition staff; WIC breastfeeding staff from Nashville, Shelby, and Knoxville; breastfeeding peer counselors; certified lactation specialists; FHW public health educators; doctors; registered dietitian nurses; nurses and other breastfeeding advocates.

The TBC strategic meeting was held on November 2, 2018 and provided forums for several discussions, listening sessions and networking around breastfeeding stakeholders across the state. TN PRAMS provided data to an FHW's epidemiologist that would potentially help TBC and other present entities coordinate and carry out events in areas where breastfeeding initiation and duration disparities are present. Additionally, TN PRAMS provided prevalence estimates that helped TBC and FHW understand what factors may influence breastfeeding initiation and duration for Tennessee mothers. Examples of these PRAMS indicators analyzed were reasons for stopping breastfeeding, reasons for not breastfeeding, events that happened at the hospital, and if a health care worker asked if the mother planned to breastfeed.