**BAN THE BAGS!**
A national campaign to rid hospitals of formula company discharge bags

Anne Merewood MPH, IBCLC
Marsha Walker RN, IBCLC

Compliments of BIG DRUG COMPANIES

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**Goal of the Mass. Breastfeeding Coalition**

Work with Mass. DPH to eliminate free formula company diaper discharge bags from all hospitals in the state

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**Possible approaches**

- “Bad for breastfeeding”
- “Bad for public health”
- “Marketing should not be allowed in the hospital”
- “Get big drug companies out of the hospital”

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**Other Issues: Hospital endorsement**

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**Opposed to formula discharge bags via hospitals:**

- US Government Accountability Office
- AAP
- ACOG
- CDC
- Office on Women’s Health (DHHS)
- WHO

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**What did we do in Massachusetts?**

Why are hospitals marketing baby formula?

Give the Bag the Boot!

Hospitals should market health, and nothing else.

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**Timeline**

**Spring/Summer 2005**
- DPH forms a task force to revise perinatal regulations

**Fall 2005**
- Public testimony
  - 38 comments favored eliminating the bags
  - 8 comments favored retaining the bags
  - International Formula Council
  - Some physicians and nurses
  - Grocery Manufacturers Association
  - Massachusetts Hospital Association
  - Ross Products Division, Abbott Laboratories

**December 2005**
- Regulations approved by the Massachusetts Public Health Council, including the elimination of hospital distribution of commercial discharge bags

**February 2006**
- Office of Administration and Finance invokes little used rule that it must approve all new regulations
- Governor Mitt Romney rescinds formula bag ban saying that it interferes with mothers’ choice

**Public Health Council meeting**
- 3 members object to rescinding the bag prohibition and ask for a 3 month study period to look into reinstating the prohibition

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**MBC Flies into Action**

- Press releases
- Boston Globe stories
- Parents Paper ad
- Writing to legislators
- Meeting with Office of Administration and Finance
- On-line petition to the Governor
  - 3500 signatures urging Mitt Romney to reinstate the bag prohibition

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**This “free” bag comes with a $700 price tag. So why does Gov. Romney want your hospital to hand it out?**

- Photo of bag with a $700 price tag

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**MBC Flies into Action**

- Rally in front of the State House to present Governor with petition
- Statements solicited from CDC, AAP, ACOG, APHA, MPHA stating their opposition to formula bag distribution

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Meanwhile... Behind the Scenes

April 2006
- Romney removes one member of the PHC who supported the bag prohibition

May 2006
- 4 days prior to the PHC meeting Romney removes the other 2 bag ban supporters
- Romney actively courting $600 million Bristol Myers Squibb facility

When Politics Collides with Health

- May 23, 2006
  - Public Health Council does not rescind bag prohibition
  - Perinatal language reverts back to previous regulations stating that breastfeeding mothers can receive a commercial bag when prescribed by the physician or requested by the mother

WHAT NEXT?

Ban the Bags! Launch of a National Campaign

- Launch/booth at ILCA conference 2006
- Press release
- website - www.banthobags.org
- Contact email: info@banthebags.org

Ban the Bags!

- Campaign Goal:
  - End hospital distribution of formula company sponsored diaper discharge packs across the USA

Ban the Bags!

- Raise public awareness of unethical marketing tactics by the infant formula industry, and of their effect on breastfeeding rates
Ban the Bags!

- Other goals:
  - Provide practical resources to advocates seeking to persuade their state or hospital to stop handing out bags
  - Study formula company bag distribution nationally; catalog all hospitals

Ban the Bags!

- Display at several conferences
- Cafepress store
- Letter from MBC to all CEOs, chiefs of OB and pediatrics, and VP/directors of nursing in MA birthing hospitals still giving out the bags, urging them to cease bag distribution – endorsed by AAP, ACOG, and AWOHNN

Ban the Bags!

- Online:
  - Evidence for bags/low breastfeeding
  - Organizations against and what they say
  - Support letters for banning bags (APHA, CDC, AAP) FAQs from hospitals
  - Action ideas
  - Tool Kit (countering industry strategies)

Ban the Bags!

- Letters moms can send to hospital saying they didn’t want the bag
- Letter MBC sent to all MA hospitals urging them not to give out bags
- Corporate compliance document
- Help hospitals develop responses to challenges they encounter during the process of removing bags

Hospital study

- OWH funding
- Goal: Catalog bag practices in all hospitals across the US
- Run by the Breastfeeding Center, BMC

Hospital study

- **BMC**: HRSA Regions I (CT,MA,ME,NH,RI,VT); II (NY,NJ); III (DC,DE,MD,PA,VA,WV); IV (AR,LA,NM,OK,TX)
- **LA Task Force**: Regions V (MI, MN, WI, IL, IN, OH) IX (CA, NV, AZ)
- **Tennessee**: Region IV (MS, AL, GA, FL, NC, SC, KY, TN)
Region I: New England (hospitals GIVING bags)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Hospitals (%)</th>
<th>Pop. (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH</td>
<td>19/27 (70)</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>5/7 (71)</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>9/12 (75)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>39/51 (76)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>28/30 (93)</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>32/34 (94)</td>
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Regions II and III

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<td>230/248 (93)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>69/69 (100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>52/54 (96)</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
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<td>6/6 (100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>37/37 (100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WV</td>
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Regions IV and V

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<td>97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>52/54 (96)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MI</td>
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Region VI

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<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>55/55 (100)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>50/50 (100)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td>Las Palmas??</td>
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Ban the Bags!

- Recent “converts”:
  - Brigham and Women’s, Boston (8,000 births)
  - Winchester hospital, MA (2007)
  - All Kaiser hospitals in N and S CA
  - All hospitals in the Providence Health System in Oregon
  - Women and Infants, RI
  - Harlem Hospital, NYC

Ban the Bags!

- Next steps:
  - Work with state coalitions to send letters/do whatever needs to be done
  - Send congrats to hospitals that ARE bag free
  - Compile a “what’s in your bag” piece for the website
What you can do!

- Send us info on your hospitals
- Send us info to post on the website
- Info on any statewide or regional efforts to ban bags locally
- Work at the state level with hospitals