



ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2008

9TH Management Committee

Portfolio	Member	Elected / Appointed
President	Mdm Rebecca Chin	Elected on 24 th Mar 2007
Vice President	Mdm Alderline Wong	Elected on 24 th Mar 2007
Secretary ¹	Dr Lena Goh	Appointed on 29 th Mar 2008
Treasurer	Mdm Yap Soon Lan	Elected on 24 th Mar 2007
Counselling Coordinator ²	Mdm Noelle Tan	Appointed on 29 th Mar 2008
Publications Editor ³	Mdm Fa'izah Bte Ahmad	Appointed on 29 th Mar 2008
Librarian ⁴	Mrs Angeline Wee-Yew	Appointed on 29 th Mar 2008
Product Coordinator ⁵	Mdm Kee Peck Yin	Appointed on 29 th Mar 2008
Talks Coordinator	Mdm Elaine Chan	Elected on 24 th Mar 2007
Membership Coordinator	Mdm Cheng Swee Chin	Elected on 24 th Mar 2007
Committee Member ⁶	-	

- ¹ Secretary – Mdm Chng Bee Wee was elected on 24th Mar 2007 and resigned on 31 Dec 2007.
Acting Secretary - Mdm Alderline Wong was appointed on 31st Dec 2007 till 29th Mar 2008.
- ² Counselling Coordinator – Mdm Vanessa Lu was elected on 24th Mar 2007 and resigned on 29th Mar 2008.
Mdm Noelle Tan was appointed on 29th Mar 2008.
- ³ Publications Editor - Mdm Kee Peck Yin was elected on 24th May 2007 and switched to Product Coordinator on 29th Mar 2008.
- ⁴ Librarian - Mdm Oniatta Effendi was elected on 24th Mar 2007 and resigned on 20th May 2007.
Mdm Chaerani Meutia was appointed on 20th May 2007 and switched to Committee Member on 29th Mar 08.
- ⁵ Products Coordinator - Mdm Haslinda Putri Harun was elected on 24th Mar 2007 and switched to Committee member on 29th May 2007.
- Acting Product Coordinator - Mdm Rebecca Chin was appointed on 5th Aug 2007 till 29th Mar 2008.
- ⁶ Committee Member - Mdm Haslinda Putri Harun was switched from Products Coordinator on 29th May 2007 and resigned on 5th Aug 2007.
Mdm Meutia Chaerani was elected on 24th Mar 2007, switched to Librarian on 20th May 2007 and back to Committee Member on 29th Mar 2008. She resigned on 26th Oct 2008.
Mdm Shirin Tan was appointed on 29th Mar 2008 and resigned on 26th Oct 2008.

Code of Governance for Charities and IPCs

According to the Code of Governance for Charities and IPCs, the committee has to do a Self-Evaluation checklist to see in which level of compliance the group is in.

The committee had submitted the Corporate Governance Evaluation on 25th November 2008 for the period 01/04/2008 to 31/3/2009.

All checklist submitted by all IPCs will be published on the Charity Portal from 1st April 2009. Members can view the checklist at www.charities.gov.sg.

Membership

Membership count

There is a 59% increase in total number of members from 73 members in 2006 to 117 members in 2007. This can be attributed 24 more members joining as full members, 20 more members joining as associate members and 9 full members upgraded to life members.

	2008	2007
Number who join as Associate members	48	28
Number who join as Full members	69	45
Total numbers who join in	117	73
Sign on as Life Members	0	3 Full Members
Convert to Life Members	14	5
Life members	173	154
Total members	290	182

The increase in the number of members converting to life members can be attributed to the promotion of free Huggies diapers, slings and other free gifts. We would like to thank Huggies and Mummy Hugs.

Activities for members in 2008

12th January Volunteers Appreciation Day on 12th Jan 2008

Volunteers, past and present, and their families, were invited to a buffet dinner where they got the chance to relax and catch up on good times. A caricature artist was present to draw caricatures as memento. We thank Mdm Kee Peck Yin for booking the function room in her home for our use.

17th May Happy Breastfeeding Mothers' Day

Some members together with their friends and families met at Pasir Ris Park for a fun and healthy day of cycling. It was a sunny day and all enjoyed themselves. We thank Mummy Hugs and PUB for NEWater.

21st June Happy Fathers' Day

Members and friends gathered at Eng Wah Suntec to watch the movie, "Kung Fu Panda". We thank Huggies and PUB for NEWater.

25th September Catch the play "Rainbow Fish"

Members and friends gathered at Alliance Française for "Rainbow Fish," a drama by the Singapore Repertory Theatre. We thank Huggies and PUB for NEWater.

We would like to appeal to members to organise activities. These activities will help new members integrate into the Group and socialise with other mothers who have successfully breastfed their babies.

Breastfeeding Mothers' Support Group (Singapore)

96 Waterloo Street, #02-04 SCWO Centre, Singapore 187967.

Tel / Fax No: 6337 0508 Counseling Hotline: 63393558

Email: office@breastfeeding.org.sg

Web Page: <http://www.breastfeeding.org.sg>

Registry of Society Number: 0150/1990

HEF Registration Number: 0048/G

Counselling

Counsellors' Gathering

A counsellors' gathering was held on 31st May at Mrs Doris Fok's place. It was a good time and place to meet because it was after one of the sessions for Training Course 2. The trainees stayed back after the course to meet and get to know other senior counsellors.

Counselling Trainers

The Committee thanks the following trainers for contributing their precious time and resources to help us:

1. Doris Fok
2. Sunitha Raman
3. Yeo Soo Lan
4. Yap Tian Sew

Counsellors

Year	2008	2007
Number of new counsellors	8	11
Number of trainees fulfilled one year on Helpline	10	9
Number of active counsellors served during stated year	42	34
Total number of counsellors (active & non-active)	110	101

We would like to thank these counsellors for their support:

1. Alderline Wong	15. Geraldine Tan	29. Poh Yi-Chinh
2. Amalia Yaniarti (Lia)	16. Goh Mui Ee	30. Rebecca Chin
3. Angeline Wee-Yew	17. Grace Ding	31. Sharon Singh
4. Annabella Long	18. Low Tuan Hong	32. Shirin Beve
5. Ariel Lim	19. Kee Peck Yin	33. Shirin Tan
6. Celia Lim	20. Lena Goh	34. Sim Biow Ee
7. Cheng Swee Chin	21. Leong Lai Peng	35. Suhailah Bte Tengku Kamarudin
8. Chng Bee Wee	22. Lilian Chiang	36. Sunitha Raman
9. Danielle Lim	23. Lilian Lee	37. Tang Lai Mui
10. Elaine Chan	24. Louise Wong	38. Vanessa Lu
11. Elaine Yeoh	25. Meutia Chaerani	39. Violet Teo
12. Esther Ang	26. Ng Ai Lin	40. Yap Soon Lan
13. Fa'izah Ahmad	27. Noelle Tan	41. Yap Tian Sew
14. Florence Ng	28. Nur Ain Istikharah	42. Yeo Leng Leng

In 2008, 2 training sessions were conducted.

Training Course 1:

Date: 16th January to 27th February 2008 (Wed)

Time: 10 am – 1 pm

Trainer: Mdm. Sunitha Raman

Counselling Trainees:

1. Angeline Wee-Yew
2. Elaine Yeoh
3. Lena Goh
4. Shirin Tan

Training Course 2:

Date: 19th April to 31st May 2008 (Sat)

Time: 10 am – 1 pm

Trainer: Mrs. Doris Fok

Counselling Trainees:

1. Amalia Yaniarti
2. Leong Lai Peng
3. Lilian Lee
4. Tengku Suhailah Binte Tengku Kamarudin

The training courses had fewer candidates because a few were sick or pulled out halfway through the training. We hope members who signed up for the Training Course can commit fully as the Trainers' times are precious too.

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Trainees who fulfilled the One Year Commitment on Helpline

These counsellors had fulfilled their commitment of volunteering one year on the Helpline. In appreciation, we will give them a Certificate during the AGM in 2009. They are :

1.	Danielle Lim	4.	Lilian Chiang	7.	Nur Ain Istikharah
2.	Elaine Chan	5.	Louise Wong	8.	Sharon R. Singh
3.	Fa'izah Ahmad	6.	Meutia Chaerani	9.	Violet Teo

We would like to appeal to members who are not counsellors to consider training as one and fulfill a commitment of one year on the Helpline. The ability of counsellors to support mothers who call the Helpline is very important in ensuring that mothers continue to breastfeed. Sometimes, a mother simply needs that one phone call for reassurance. Above all, the most important role of counsellors is to offer a listening ear and empathy when counselling.

The Group is truly blessed to have a group of volunteer counsellors who are willing to sacrifice their valuable personal time to help man the Helpline. Their passion and determination to be the support for others is admirable and the Group would like to thank all volunteer counsellors for your selfless contribution.

Helpline Report

	2008	2007
Number of calls reported	1381	1084
Number of Counsellors who submitted reports	16	18
Number of Active Counsellors as at December	36	34
Estimated number of calls	3108	2074
Average calls handled by a Counsellor	86	61

Although 2 fewer counsellors submitted their reports, the reports indicated that the number of calls handled in 2008 had increased by 49.86%.

The average number of calls handled by each counsellor had increased. This explained the feedback from some mothers that their calls were not returned on the same day or within 24 hours.

The committee wishes to thank all the counsellors who made an effort to submit their monthly reports. We hope more counsellors will submit their reports to help the group have a better understanding of the number of callers the Helpline can reach out to and the type of information these callers seek.

The ages of the babies of the callers are as follows:					
2008			2007		
No.	Callers	Category	Callers	Category	
1 st	409	Still totally breastfed babies < 6 weeks old	351	Still totally breastfed babies < 6 weeks old	
2 nd	221	Never fully breastfed their babies from birth	158	Never fully breastfed their babies from birth	
3 rd	210	Still totally breastfed babies 6 weeks – 3 months old	135	Never fully breastfed their babies from birth	

This figure does not take into account that there are 75 calls not collated because some counsellors did not ask for significant details like the age of the baby and whether the mother is still fully or partially breastfeeding. We hope counsellors will be more careful in this area so that the data can be more accurate.

The top category of callers is the same as last year, namely those with babies who are less than 6 weeks old. This underlines the importance of the Group's support function because many mothers face difficulties in breastfeeding in the initial weeks.

Most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the Helpline are:

No.	2008	2007
1 st	Insufficient milk	Expressed breast milk – collection and storage
2 nd	EBM – Collection & Storage	Insufficient milk
3 rd	Understanding demand and supply	Understanding demand and supply
4 th	Latching problem	Sufficient milk? General assurance
5 th	Sufficient milk? General assurance	Latching problem
6 th	Supplementary feeds	Engorgement
7 th	Reduced supply	Breast refusal/preference for bottle <i>and</i> Working Schedule & Expressing
8 th	Sore nipples	Sore nipples
9 th	Engorgement	Sick mother
10 th	Breast refusal/preference for bottle	Duration between feeds

It is not surprising that many mothers still think they do not have enough milk. It is a common misconception. BMSG(S) is planning to publicise more widely our workshops for expectant parents. With more relevant and timely information, they can better prepare for breastfeeding and avoid potential breastfeeding difficulties. Thus, increasing their success rate in breastfeeding and eventually, prolonging the weaning stage.

Improvement

The Group had improved on the counsellors' report format by adding more categories for issues that are more frequently raised by mothers who called the Helpline. Some examples are:

Milk blister	Sterilising pump while at work	Nursing through pregnancy	Tandem Nursing
Vaccination	Pumping and travelling	Color / perm / rebond hair	

Email Counseling

Along with the increase in the number of calls to the Helpline, email counselling also received an increase of 16%.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2008	28	32	32	65	53	76	77	99	71	72	86	80	771
2007	65	44	56	63	55	53	47	64	62	61	56	38	664

The peak months for email counselling for 2008 are in August, November and December. As the World Breastfeeding Week is in August, it is expected to receive more emails during that period.

Workshops

There was a 64% increase in the number of participants in all the workshops.

Workshop Participants

Series	2008				2007			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Preparing to Breastfeed	20	22	29	21	9	11	19	9
Breastfeeding in the First Month	26	14	21	21	9	9	20	12
Managing Breastfeeding Difficulties	20	19	24	19	10	9	20	14
Intro to Semi-Solids	21	15	29	22	10	11	20	13
Total for Workshop Series	353				205			
No. of Back to Work (B2W) workshops	12				10			
No. of participants for workshops (B2W)	53				42			
Grand total no. of participants	406				247			

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Speakers

We thank the following Speakers for their continued and dedicated contribution to BMSG(S) :

1.	Alderline Wong	4.	Joanna Peck	7.	Sunitha Raman
2.	Barbara Hun	5.	Michelle Png	8.	Yap Tian Sew
3.	Doris Fok	6.	Stella Au		

The committee is constantly looking for suitable candidates amongst the Counsellors to train as Speakers. But it is not an easy endeavour because many Counsellors are working and have other commitments besides volunteering on the Helpline or email counselling.

External Workshops

19th April 2008

Mdm. Stella Au conducted a workshop titled, "Back to Work", at the MacPherson Community Club.

7th June 2008

Mrs. Doris Fok conducted a workshop titled, "Why breastfeed so long?" at the Tanjong Pagar Family Service Centre.

Improvement

The Group had successfully switched from slides presentation to Power Point presentation for the series of workshops by end of 2008. Photos, presentation material and notes for participants were also updated.

Feedback forms are now given out to participants in an effort to obtain their comments so as to help the Group improve our workshops.

Future directions

Discussions on extending breastfeeding education to a wider target audience are ongoing. One plan is to give talks to the older generation of parents as their support has been found to be quite critical for all breastfeeding mothers.

We are also exploring ways to reach more expectant mothers through the Polyclinics which will then also mean we will require more speakers. We hope members who can contribute will step forward.

Library

New books

Two books were donated by Mrs. Josephine Leow, a friend of Vice-President Alderline Wong to the library. A brand new book was donated by Ms. Linda Sim.

Books borrowed

Year	2008	2007
Number of books	44	13

As we have some breastfeeding books and many breastfeeding magazines that are not available from the national and regional libraries, we encourage our members to pick up our books to enhance their breastfeeding knowledge.

Improvement

Mdm Fa'izah Ahmad had recommended the website <http://www.librarything.com/> which allowed us to list the books available in our library. Mrs Angeline Wee-Yew did a stock take of all the books and had listed them. This made it easier for members to search for books and contact the office to check for availability and resulted in more books borrowed out.

Members can also mail the books back to the office instead of dropping it off personally, making it more convenient for some members.

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Publications

Breastfeeding Booklets

10,000 booklets were printed in August 2008, sponsored by Huggies and Poise. Other than being distributed in the BMSG(S) office, other locations include KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Eastshore Hospital, Gleneagles Hospital, Mt Alvernia Hospital, Mt Elizabeth Hospital, National University Hospital, Singapore General Hospital, Raffles Hospital and selected polyclinics. Many members have also distributed some to their friends. Plans are already in the works to print a new batch with a few sponsors to give the Group more control over the print design and layout.

Keeping Abreast Newsletter

3 issues of **Keeping Abreast (KA)** were printed in 2008 – in March, May and August. Planned December 2008 issue was postponed for print in January 2009 due to lack of manpower.

Practical Hints on Breastfeeding

Practical Hints on Breastfeeding handbook is still under review but progressing at a steadier pace after many interruptions in the past years. Target completion of this project is by end of 2009. We thank our members and their friends for their support by sharing their breastfeeding stories and photos for this project. We welcome members' continued contribution of their breastfeeding stories.

"Breastmilk is Best" decals

We had distributed more than 1,000 pieces of the decals to members and supporters to increase the awareness of our website to support breastfeeding.

Website

Web Traffic in www.breastfeeding.org.sg can be tracked since July 2006. Our website has shown a consistent increase since the start of the tracking.

For July - December 2006, there were a total of 11,166 unique visitors who visited us 20,802 times and read a total of 127,677 web pages. The figure for a full 2006 can be an estimate of 250,000 web pages being read. For January – December 2007, there were a total of 25,008 visitors who visited us 44,774 times and read a total of 282,847 web pages. As there was an increase of about 32,000 web pages, we can estimate that we received about a 12% increase in number of web pages read. For January – December 2008, there were a total of 44,153 visitors who visited us 65,661 times and read a total of 364,178 web pages. As there is an increase of about 81,331 web pages, we experienced a 28% increase in the number of web pages read from 2007 to 2008.

2006	Visitors	Pages	2007	Visitors	Pages	2008	Visitors	Pages
			Jan	1924	21139	Jan	2687	25809
			Feb	1726	17308	Feb	2578	21048
			Mar	2184	25975	Mar	3553	31226
			Apr	1692	19659	Apr	3585	31160
			May	1716	20960	May	3936	28614
			Jun	1819	22232	Jun	4640	33238
Jul	1331	14472	Jul	1991	24409	Jul	4537	35663
Aug	2436	31321	Aug	2740	32387	Aug	4600	36798
Sep	1881	20475	Sep	2342	26602	Sep	4078	32595
Oct	2039	22116	Oct	2384	26124	Oct	3578	31371
Nov	1806	19548	Nov	2364	24554	Nov	3434	28160
Dec	1673	19745	Dec	2126	21498	Dec	2947	28496
Total	11,166	127,677	Total	25,008	282,847	Total	44,153	364,178

As mothers become more internet-savvy, much of their support can be received online. Thus we can see that more information is being read on our website. As our website is available 24/7 and mothers are able to read at their convenience, it is extremely important in supporting their breastfeeding efforts.

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World Breastfeeding Week 2008

By Lena Goh

WBW 2008 Chairperson

We celebrated World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) with the theme “Going for Gold”, with calls for increased support for mothers in achieving the gold standard of infant feeding. The latter refers to the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) recommendations: Mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their babies exclusively for the first six months and continue breastfeeding together with feeding other appropriate complementary food for up to two years and beyond.

The WBW Sub-Committee consisting of Alderline, Swee Chin, Sharon, Ivy and myself had our first meeting on 16th May 2008. We have proposed numerous venues such as Suntec City, Esplanade, MacPherson Community Club, MacPherson ITE and NVPC at The Giving Place. We have also come out with programmes and activities that can be done before and on the event day, such as having celebrity speakers to attract participants/crowds, synchronised breastfeeding, breastfeeding talks, baby contest, mothers’ beauty contest, breastfeeding photo contest and a mini bazaar selling breastfeeding items. We even wanted to have a breastfeeding torch relay on MRT trains too. The event date was 16th August. However, due to the lack of funds, manpower and time, some of the suggestions were dropped. In addition, synchronised breastfeeding was also discarded as it was done last year.

As the World Alliance for Breastfeeding (WABA) was giving out medals for WBW, we decided to go for gold for the two categories – Global Breastfeeding Wave event and Marathon event. Our Global breastfeeding wave event garnered a bronze medal as we have less than 200 mothers to qualify for gold in mass breastfeeding. A series of 5 events was organized to celebrate WBW and garnered us the gold medal for the WABA’s Marathon event.

Going for Gold @ the breastfeeding photo contest

This was launched on our website, newsletter and more than 8 parenting forums and blogs.

Going for Gold with Love 97.2FM

Our counselling trainer, Mrs. Doris Fok, and long-time counsellor, Ms. Tang Lai Mui, did a live radio counselling.

Going for Gold with CASE

We worked with CASE to highlight the direct costs of not breastfeeding. This press conference on formula costs and the benefits of breastfeeding was widely covered on newspapers, television and radio.

Going for Gold @ NVPC

As the Beijing Olympics was on-going, we expanded our theme of “Going for Gold”: just as an Olympic athlete needs support to get the gold medal, a mother needs support from family, friends, community and government to breastfeed successfully and overcome challenges. These challenges include overcoming misinformation, breastfeeding while working outside the home and overcoming doubts about her ability to breastfeed her baby.

It took us almost 2 months to prepare and plan for this event. As most of us are working mothers, we have to delegate duties and work independently. Alderline was in charge of getting sponsors, getting the money, logistics, GOH invitation, press release, publicity, flyers distribution, Catholic High School student’s coordination and a lot more. Swee Chin was in charge of mass breastfeeding, Noelle and Rachel were in charge of all art work and design, and I was in charge of venue coordination, speakers’ invitation and coordination and logistics. Ivy was in charge of publicity, administrative work and registration. Elaine Chan and Violet Teo helped to promote the event in online forums. Angeline and a few of us were in charge of goodie bags packing and transporting them.

On the actual day, Soon Lan was in charge of registration booth, Sharon was in charge of the goodies bags collection booth and Fa’izah was in charge of the membership booth. Peck Yin took charge of the mini Olympic game booths with 2 Catholic High students’ assistance. The games booths entertained the fathers and their older children as the mothers took time off to indulge in a little retail therapy. I am sure there are many others whom I have not mentioned who helped out in other ways. It is through all the hard work of these individuals which made the event happened and successfully.

Schedule:

12.30pm	Registration & Collection of goodie bags
13.00pm	1 st Talk by Dr Stephanie Chee on “Why mothers should breastfeed their babies beyond 6 months?”
13.30pm	Arrival of Guest of Honour, Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, Minister of State (MCYS)
13.35pm	Opening Address: Mdm Rebecca Chin, President BMSG(S)

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13.45pm	Prize presentation for photo contest; Token of Appreciation to Guest of Honour
14.00pm	Synchronised Mass Breastfeeding Starts
14.30pm	Lucky Draw (Consolation Prizes), Tea Break & Kiddy Olympics
15.00pm	2 nd Talk by Ms Doris Fok on "What's wrong with breastfeeding?"
15.30pm	3 rd talk by Dr Yong Tze Tein on "Father's role in breastfeeding and upbringing of your child"
16.00pm	Lucky Draw (Top 3 prizes)
16.05pm	Token of Appreciation to Speakers

Going for Gold@ Mind Your Body

As a nice closure of the celebrations, we gathered 5 members at Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) studio for interviews and to be photographed for the 21st August "Mind Your Body" with a breastfeeding theme.

We would like to thank all our supporters, sponsors and members of the press for making these events a success. More details of the celebrations can be found on our Jan 2009 issue of *Keeping Abreast*.

Others

Flag Day

National Council of Social Service (NCSS) put up a ballot for 2009 Flag Days on September 2008. We have successfully balloted for a Flag Day on 3rd December 2009. As Flag Day is a labour intensive fund raising, we appeal to members to help us on this day.

Project Law

NCSS has a Project Law Assistance scheme for pro bono consultancy legal help. We have applied and were successful to receive this assistance to review our Constitution. Target completion is by end of 2009

Board Match Program

National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) Singapore has a Board Match program to build capacity in the non-profit sector by matching individuals committed to the idea of strengthening non-profit boards with the relevant charitable and other Non-profit Organisations (NPOs) in Singapore. They have referred Ms. Celine Low with a financial background as well as breastfeeding experience, to join our board for the term of 2009 - 2011.

Volunteer Management Fund

NVPC has launched the above and we applied for the above grant in May 2008. This fund pays 80% of operational expenses in the first year and 50% of second year. Our appeal was rejected on Nov 2008. The committee shall continue to appeal for regular funding to sustain our operations.

GIRO Donation Scheme

We have implemented a GIRO scheme for the ease of our donors to donate regularly to us. Currently, the take up rate is less than 20 individuals. As we do not have a regular source of funding, we would appeal to our members to take up this scheme and support us.

Institute of Public Character (IPC) Status

Our IPC status has been successfully renewed till 14 January 2010. This will allow our donors to continue to receive double tax deductions for the donations.

School Fund Raising

The Northland Primary School had adopted the Group as their beneficiary for their fund raising, as part of the "Enterprise Day Challenge" organised by the Action Community for Entrepreneurship (ACE) and in partnership with eBay Singapore. Proceeds from the profits of items such as soft toys, board games, pens and other accessories sold on eBay was donated to BMSG(S). The amount raised at the end of the challenge in December 2008 was \$2,000. We thank our member, Ms. Jilyn Chew, and Northland Primary School for their support.

China Sanlu Milk Scandal

The committee wrote to the press in view of this scandal to promote breastfeeding and our letters were published on AsiaOne website. More details will be found on the Keeping Abreast issues in 2009.

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Sale of Infant Food Ethics Committee Singapore (SIFECs) Report

By Alderline Wong (BMSG(S) Representative to SIFECs) and extracted from Jun 2008 minutes

1. The SIFECs committee had its annual meeting on 25 Jun (Fri) 2008. The infant food industry representatives were reminded of the SIFECs code of ethics when marketing their products to consumers and healthcare professionals. The SIFECs Code of Ethics, now in its 3rd edition, is the working document which provides guidelines for the distribution, sale and promotion of food products for infants 0-6 months of age in Singapore. A copy of the code of ethics can be found at <http://www.hpb.gov.sg/foodforhealth/edumaterials.aspx?educationalmaterialtype=&pgno=2>.
2. The infant food industry representatives were reminded of the following with respect to their marketing practices to consumers:
 - a. All materials (e.g. product labels, detailers, education materials, marketing collaterals) related to infant formula / infant food products within the scope of SIFECs Code of Ethics must be submitted to the SIFECs Vetting Committee for approval.
 - b. Pack shots of infant formula are not allowed on door gifts.
 - c. Not allowed to provide and fund mothercraft services.
 - d. Comparison between breast milk and infant formula is not allowed on any materials (e.g. product label, detail aids, brochures for consumers and health professionals, advertisement/ advertorial, website content) related to infant formula/ infant food products.
 - e. The standard important notice on breastfeeding must be included in all materials related to infant formula / infant food products. Refer to Clause 4.3 of the SIFECs Code of Ethics.
 - f. Sampling of infant formula (at public & clinic level) is strictly not allowed. This covers both old and new formulations.
 - g. Offering free infant formula to expecting and new mothers violates the Code
 - h. Giving ready-to-feed infant formula as samples to doctors and to new mothers at GP/specialist clinics is strictly not allowed.
 - i. Using solicited information to offer infant formula samples to expecting/ new mothers violates the SIFECs Code. Offering baby nutrition advice (e.g. on feeding, which formula to choose) is not allowed.
 - j. Practices that violate the Code includes:
 - i. special display of infant formula (e.g. block stack, exclusive shelf)
 - ii. special promotion of infant formula (e.g. discount, free gift)
 - iii. infant formula included as an item in a prize or hamper.
3. The chairperson, Dr. Ho Lai Yun, reminded the representatives to be mindful of legal implications when providing information to consumers in websites.

4. Report on patterns of violations

Year	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8
No. of violations	34	20	26	36	43

5. A system of penalties was proposed for infant food companies. The proposed penalty system is based on violations and resolutions and consists of 4 tiers (Level 1 to 4, four being the most severe). As the infant food companies were reviewing this proposal, this is currently not implemented.
6. All members of BMSG(S) are urged to report violations to HPB_SIFECs@hpb.gov.sg so that breastfeeding is not undermined.

Association for Breastfeeding Advocacy Singapore (ABAS) Report

Extracted from ABAS Annual Report for 2008

ABAS's objective for 2008 was to continue with the development of materials to support the **campaign to create awareness on the importance of breastfeeding**. We also continued with the **programs to educate healthcare professionals** to enable them to effectively support the breastfeeding mothers. Outreach activities to workplaces was also continued to create awareness among employers and to encourage mothers to continue breastfeeding when they return to work. ABAS members also participated in the World Breastfeeding Week Event 2008 by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action, conducting activities for both the Marathon and Breastfeeding Wave Event.

Breastfeeding Mothers' Support Group (Singapore)

96 Waterloo Street, #02-04 SCWO Centre, Singapore 187967.

Tel / Fax No: 6337 0508 Counseling Hotline: 63393558

Email: office@breastfeeding.org.sg

Web Page: <http://www.breastfeeding.org.sg>

Registry of Society Number: 0150/1990

HEF Registration Number: 0048/G

1. Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign

ABAS developed an education video on breastfeeding to promote breastfeeding to new mothers. A production of 4000 pieces of the DVD was done and targeted to be distributed at the AGM to the various hospitals with maternity facilities for distributions to all new mothers for a one-month period. A survey of 20 mothers per hospital will be conducted to assess the usefulness of the video.

In 2006, ABAS formulated a Breastfeeding Policy and invited member associations to endorse the Policy. To date, 18 agencies and 65 private clinics had endorsed the Breastfeeding Policy.

2. Educating Healthcare Professionals

ABAS conducted two Breastfeeding Workshops for Nurses on 11 November and 6 December 2008, and the target were nurses from the various hospitals. A total of 123 nurses attended the workshops. A Continuing Medical Education (CME) for doctors was conducted at Thomson Medical Centre on the 23 August 2008. This was well attended by 31 doctors and 44 nurses.

Positive feedbacks from both doctors and nurses were received from the workshops and CME session. On 21 March 2009, another CME has been scheduled at Mount Alvernia Hospital.

3. Outreach Activities to Workplaces

ABAS conducted two talks at the workplaces to educate mothers on ways to continue breastfeeding after returning to work. The talks were conducted at Government Investment Corporation (Singapore), attended by 20 ladies and at Sussie Credit attended by 19 ladies. In addition, a consultation with the management of Axis Pte Ltd was done to provide them with information on how to set up a lactation facility in the company to support mothers returning to work to continue with their breastfeeding.

4. Supporting Activities

In August, several ABAS member hospitals (KK Women's and Children's Hospital – KKH, Mount Alvernia Hospital, Thomson Medical Centre & National University Hospital) and the Breastfeeding Mothers' Support Group (Singapore) – BMSG (S) participated in the World Breastfeeding Week Event by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA). BMSG (S) obtained a Gold Medal in the Marathon Event and a Bronze Medal for the Breastfeeding Wave Event; KKH obtained a Silver Medal in the Breastfeeding Wave Event and Mount Alvernia Hospital obtained a Bronze Medal in the Marathon Breastfeeding Event.

5. Administrative Support

Administrative support in ABAS continues to be provided by engaging the part-time help of Eileen Tham as the Secretariat and this has been in place since January 2007.

6. Charity Portal Update and Requirement

As of 2008, ABAS is required to comply with the requirements initiated by the governing body in order to maintain its charity status. Two areas, namely the declaration on the conflict of interest by the Executive Members and the guidelines on Human Resource and Financial matters were reviewed and put in place.

7. Funding for ABAS

For year 2008, the Health Promotion Board (Singapore) (HPB) withheld the funding to ABAS from April to October 2008 to align its funding of projects to be with the financial year ending in the month of March. Funding of \$17,350 for ABAS was approved for initiatives projected from 1 November 2008 to 31 March 2009 and claims were made based on the completion of an activity. A total of \$13,318.86 was claimed from HPB for ABAS projects conducted from November 2008 to February 2009. The activities were mainly on the production of 4,000 pieces of DVD, health professional educations and secretarial support. We are grateful for the active support from HPB in our efforts to promote breastfeeding in Singapore. It continues to be a challenge for every ABAS member and Representative as each continues in their effort to build a breastfeeding culture in Singapore, playing a key role in promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding in their respective organizations.

BMSG(S) has five Representatives in ABAS for 2008. Ivy Low is a Committee Member in the ABAS Executive Committee. The other Representatives are Rebecca Chin, BMSG(S) President; Wan Siew Kwun, Counsellor; Sunitha Raman, Counsellor Trainer and Prof. Audrey Chia, Medical Liaison Officer.

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