



STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022

OUR VISION

A Northwest region where every baby has access to the human milk they need.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to improve the health and survival of the Northwest's most vulnerable babies.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our mission is based on the belief that every baby deserves access to human milk. Community, health, compassion, integrity, and generosity are the values that guide the work we do.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Northwest Mothers Milk Bank (NWMMB) is a community-based, not-for-profit milk bank founded to serve the Pacific Northwest region with a safe source of donor human milk. Our mission is carried out through collection, pasteurization and distribution of human donor milk, education, advocacy and research. An exclusive human milk diet is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, The World Health Organization and UNICEF for all babies, ensuring the best chance of health and survival.

NWMMB is rooted in community. Founded in 2008 by a group of passionate and accomplished community members who, through dedication and arduous work, increased public knowledge and acceptance of donor milk use. Following a strategic plan that included fundraising, community outreach, and hospital partnerships, the nine-member volunteer board succeeded in opening the first human milk bank in the Pacific Northwest in July 2013.

One in nine infants in the Pacific Northwest are born premature. Prematurity puts an infant at risk for life-threatening infections, prolonged hospital admission, and lifelong disabilities. NWMMB prioritizes these fragile infants, providing a safe source of human milk when their mother's own milk may not be 100% available. Evidenced-based research shows the use of human donor milk from an accredited milk bank should be the standard of care for supplementation of hospitalized premature and ill newborns, particularly those in neonatal intensive care units. An exclusive human milk diet for all infants is proven to provide the essential nutrients and immunological protection necessary for optimal growth and improved long-term health.

Northwest Mothers Milk Bank is an accredited member of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA). NWMMB follows strict guidelines to ensure the safety of donated milk through careful screening, laboratory testing, and pasteurization techniques. Annually, NWMMB is assessed for compliance with HMBANA guidelines.

NWMMB has grown rapidly in the four years since opening our doors. Collection, pasteurization and distribution goals were exceeded. NWMMB has dispensed over 734,000 ounces of safe donor milk throughout Northwest communities. Financial stability, primarily through the sales of milk and early foundation support, have allowed us to support operations, increase staff and begin to grow programs. We have seen an increase in the demand for donor milk from hospitals, birthing centers and the outpatient community. A charitable care program, named Evie's Fund, was established as a resource for families for whom the milk processing fees are a barrier. Evie's Fund has grown each year, which has allowed vulnerable infants to receive life-saving donor milk after hospital discharge.

Currently, hospitals and outpatient families receive little, if any, reimbursement for human donor milk. Oregon and Washington do not currently have systems to support third-party and Medicaid reimbursement for donor milk. The use of donor milk for hospitalized premature infants has become the standard of care and is supported by evidence-based research. This presents a challenge for health care systems who are struggle with limited budgets and prioritization of resources for the care of vulnerable infants. Neonatal Intensive Care Units are one of the most expensive units in any hospital. NWMMB has identified a need to raise legislative awareness about the importance of human milk, including examining other state programs who have been successful in reimbursements. By engaging in this work, NWMMB's goal is to increase accessibility within hospitals for the most fragile infants by providing a means for hospitals to liberalize policies for donor milk administration with reduced budgetary restraint.

NWMMB has had overwhelming support from community members and healthcare partners. Currently, NWMMB is operating in approximately 4000 square feet of space. In 2008, Providence Health System provided 1,400 square feet of in-kind office and processing space which allowed us to open our doors and execute our mission. NWMMB quickly outgrew this space as more staff members were added, more milk was donated and additional equipment was required to process increased requests for donor milk. In 2015, an additional 1,400-sq. ft. warehouse location was leased to house frozen milk donations and dry storage. As growth continued, Providence Health System again stepped in, offering an additional 1,100 square feet of in-kind adjacent space which has enabled the organization to focus its efforts on helping premature and fragile babies thrive. Optimally, by 2022, all NWMMB operations will be lodged under one roof.

NWMMB plays a vital role in our region's healthcare landscape. A new strategic plan is needed to prioritize the activities that will guide our organization's view of success. This plan will support our responsibility as a community-oriented milk bank; focusing our energy, resources and staff hours toward accomplishing our mission of improving the health and survival of the Northwest's most vulnerable infants.

OUR OVERARCHING TARGETS 2018-2022

Our targets fall into four primary categories:

- Increasing access to pasteurized donor human milk
- Protecting, supporting and promoting breastfeeding
- Partnering to advance evidence-based practice
- Improving facilities

INCREASING ACCESS TO PASTEURIZED DONOR HUMAN MILK

Goal 1: Northwest Mothers Milk Bank will improve equitable access to human donor milk by increasing the number of hospitals we serve from 64 to 80 within the next five years.

NWMMB prioritizes hospitalized infants as the primary recipients of human donor milk, with emphasis on facilities that care for premature infants. Cost of donor milk is a barrier for some hospitals' ability to

provide access for their patients and many find they must limit eligibility criteria. Implementing strategies to obtain third-party reimbursement will allow more vulnerable infants access to a human milk diet.

Strategies:

- Establishment of additional hospital accounts
- Revitalize committee to explore legislative readiness to establish Medicaid/third-party insurance coverage for human donor milk in Oregon and Washington
- Identify necessary relationships and develop engagement plan for strategic partners in Oregon and Washington
- Design and implement a plan for seeking reimbursement in Oregon and Washington

Goal 2: Northwest Mothers Milk Bank will increase milk collection volumes by 15% and distribution volumes by 10% yearly.

The availability of human donor milk is based on the principle of supply and demand. Milk donor recruitment is essential for adequate supply available for processing and distribution. Distribution is dependent on hospital account and outpatient orders. Milk collection volumes exceed distribution volumes to balance the milk that is unable to be dispensed due to bacterial contamination.

Strategies:

- Design, plan and implement outreach events and materials with the goal of educating potential milk donors and expanding our milk donor base
- Establishment of additional Milk Drop locations
- Establishment of additional hospital accounts
- Collaborate with HMBANA banks to share positive messaging about milk donation

Goal 3: Northwest Mothers Milk Bank will provide significant charitable care for families who are unable to afford milk processing fees (Evie's Fund).

Evie's Fund is a charitable care program established by the NWMMB Board of Directors to increase access to donor milk for infants in need. Most monies to support this fund comes from foundations and private donation. In most cases, charitable care access is made available to infants who have been discharged from the hospital and have an on-going medical need for donor milk.

Strategies:

- Annually assess and define the organization's ability to provide significant funding for charitable care
- Seek stable funding sources for Evie's Fund
- Prioritize one major fundraising event specific to Evie's Fund/year
- Build relationships with healthcare specialists who care for vulnerable infants

Goal 4: Northwest Mothers Milk Bank will develop four new satellite distribution sites within the next five years

Approximately 15% of NWMMB distribution has been to infants in the outpatient setting who have an on-going need for milk after hospital discharge. Potential outpatient infants reside throughout Oregon and Washington and typically their need for milk is immediate. Milk is shipped overnight, requiring an 18-24 hour wait for families who live outside the Portland area.

Strategies:

- Explore avenues for milk distribution to increase access throughout the NW
- Develop a model for satellite distribution
- Target potential satellite channels
- Implement and assess satellite sites

PROTECT, SUPPORT AND PROMOTE BREASTFEEDING**Goal 1: Northwest Mothers Milk Bank will support work that is being done to increase breastfeeding rates in NW communities, with a specific focus on underserved and culturally diverse populations.**

High breastfeeding rates and a positive breastfeeding culture are essential foundations for a thriving community milk bank. Culturally appropriate lactation support is a critical component for breastfeeding success. Health disparities are well documented. NWMMB desires to be an essential part of the network of healthcare services to support all new families and their infants throughout NW communities, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin or citizenship status, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, or economic status.

Strategies:

- Gain better understanding of the landscape of community lactation and breastfeeding support
- Identify partners engaged in lactation and breastfeeding support with emphasis on those providing lactation support for underserved populations
- Develop a strategic plan to support external community partners
- Incorporate diversity and equity into NWMMB operations
- Focus awareness and outreach with culturally diverse populations

PARTNERING TO ADVANCE EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**Goal 1: NWMMB will become a leader in providing professional quality evidence-based education to healthcare providers.**

Every healthcare provider specializing in maternal and child health should understand the benefits of breastfeeding, the importance of milk donation and the use of human donor milk. Providing evidenced-based education to healthcare providers throughout our region is essential to the promotion of milk banking in our communities. NWMMB wishes to establish itself as experts on human milk banking. Many educational conferences, symposiums and workshops are held across the United States each year which provide opportunity for dissemination of information.

Strategies:

- Continue engagement with educational programs as exhibitors and/or speakers
- Establish educational partnership with academic institutions
- Host annual Donor Milk Symposiums in Oregon and Washington

Goal 2: Northwest Mothers Milk Bank will promote and partner in research to advance science.

More research is needed on all aspects of human milk; its components, benefits and use for hospitalized infants. Studies are needed to further advance the field of human milk banking. Quality research is essential to improve the health and survival of vulnerable infants.

Strategies:

- Identify potential research opportunities and partnerships
- Engage in planned research studies as available

IMPROVING FACILITIES

Goal 1: Northwest Mothers Milk Bank will develop and implement a plan to consolidate operations in a state-of-the-art facility in a new location within the next five years.

To meet the growing demands of hospitals and families in our communities, NWMMB projects needing a larger processing facility within the next 3-5 years. A new location will allow for all operations to be under one roof accommodating offices, processing room, walk-in freezers, adequate storage for supplies and back-up generators.

Strategies:

- Strengthen financial position by implementing financial practices (reflected in professional review in 2017) and build financial reserves
- Develop a funding plan specific to the capital campaign
- Develop a facilities plan, considering options and requirements
- Create a capital campaign plan (campaign leadership, funding plans, relationships, events, grants, etc.)
- Implement campaign through the quiet, public and evaluation stages