



Co-Chair Report for 2023

Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario (BFION) is a volunteer multidisciplinary organization, consisting of health care professionals, service providers and consumers within Ontario who share the common goal of protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding through the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Initiative.

BFION is the provincial representative for the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC).

Our mission is to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding in the province of Ontario through the adoption, implementation and maintenance of the BFI standards described in the BCC's BFI Implementation Guideline and companion documents. Our vision is for Ontario to have a Baby-Friendly culture.

Our goals are to:

- Increase the number of BFI designated hospitals and community health services.
- Support designated facilities to maintain BFI designation.
- Increase BFION membership participation.
- Increase awareness and education of best practices related to infant feeding.

Our current Executive members are as follows:

Position	Executive Member
Co-Chair Community Co-Chair Hospital	Shannon McLennon (LOA Sept 2023) Margaret Sherratt – (interim Oct 2023) Alanna Lakoff – resigned Sept 2023
Past Chair	Louise Guthro
Membership Coordinator	Linda Young
Political Advocacy Coordinator	Joan Bueckert
Social Media Coordinator	Angie Manners
BFI Assessment Coordinator for Ontario	Marg La Salle
Treasurer	Hiltrud Dawson
Breastfeeding Committee for Canada Representative	Role filled by Co-Chairs and BFI Assessment Coordinator
Website Administrator	Karen Frith
Communications Coordinator	Laura Dueck
Chair Elect – Community Chair Elect - Hospital	Vacant – nomination due in 2025 Nomination due in 2024

Highlights From BFI Ontario For the Past Year

A highlight for BFION in 2023 was the engagement of a new government representative, Shilpa Gambhir. Shilpa has attended membership meetings and recently the BCC BFI Provincial/Territorial meetings. The executive team had the opportunity to virtually meet with Shilpa and provided a comprehensive overview of BFI and breastfeeding in the province as well as opportunities for collaboration. Provincially, in all health care settings there are struggles with the post pandemic reality – a stretched and weary workforce, exodus of experienced voices, and fragmented supports and services. Each of these factors have impacted engagement with BFION.

Recognizing the vast and consistent research evidence on the importance of breastfeeding for infants and mothers, the Global Breastfeeding Collective led by the World Health Organization and UNICEF, set action targets for enhancing breastfeeding success. Among these is the goal to increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months of age to at least 70% by 2030 ([Global Breastfeeding Scorecard, 2019](#), p.3)¹. The exclusive breastfeeding rate for Ontario as reported in [Canada's Breastfeeding Progress Report 2022](#)² (Public Health Agency of Canada) was only 36.3%, a rate that was lower than rates that were reported for six other provinces and territories (p.4). Although a system for monitoring breastfeeding rates in Ontario was developed by BORN Ontario, the ongoing collection and availability of system wide data on breastfeeding rates has not been extended beyond hospital discharge data. As organizations adjust resources for care delivery, it will be important to monitor the impact identified through discussions with BFION members and the outcomes for breastfeeding families.

During 2023 BFION engaged with membership in many ways. These are highlighted below:

Education Sessions Hosted in 2023

Date	Topic	Presented By	Attendance	Recording
January 27, 2023	BFION's Response to Public Health Ontario's Q&A Considerations for Re-Designating as Baby-Friendly	Marg LaSalle	29 Attended	56 views
June 23, 2023	NEW Parent Empowerment Cards - How and where they can be used	Marg LaSalle	25 Attended	9 views
September 22, 2023	Prepare to Celebrate National Breastfeeding Week (NBW) Oct 1-7; BCC's NBW Toolkit and Speakers' Series	Marg LaSalle	28 Attended	26 views
November 24, 2023	Exploring the Impact of COVID 19 on Infant Feeding within Hospitals and Community	Margaret Sherratt	27 Attended	15 views

- Membership meetings have been held quarterly on Fridays from 12 - 1 pm. The meetings start with the Hot Topic presentation and conclude with updates and an opportunity for open discussion. Overall attendance at the meetings decreased this year. Total attendance from the four regular meetings with Hot Topic presentations was 109 participants in 2023 compared to 151 in 2022.

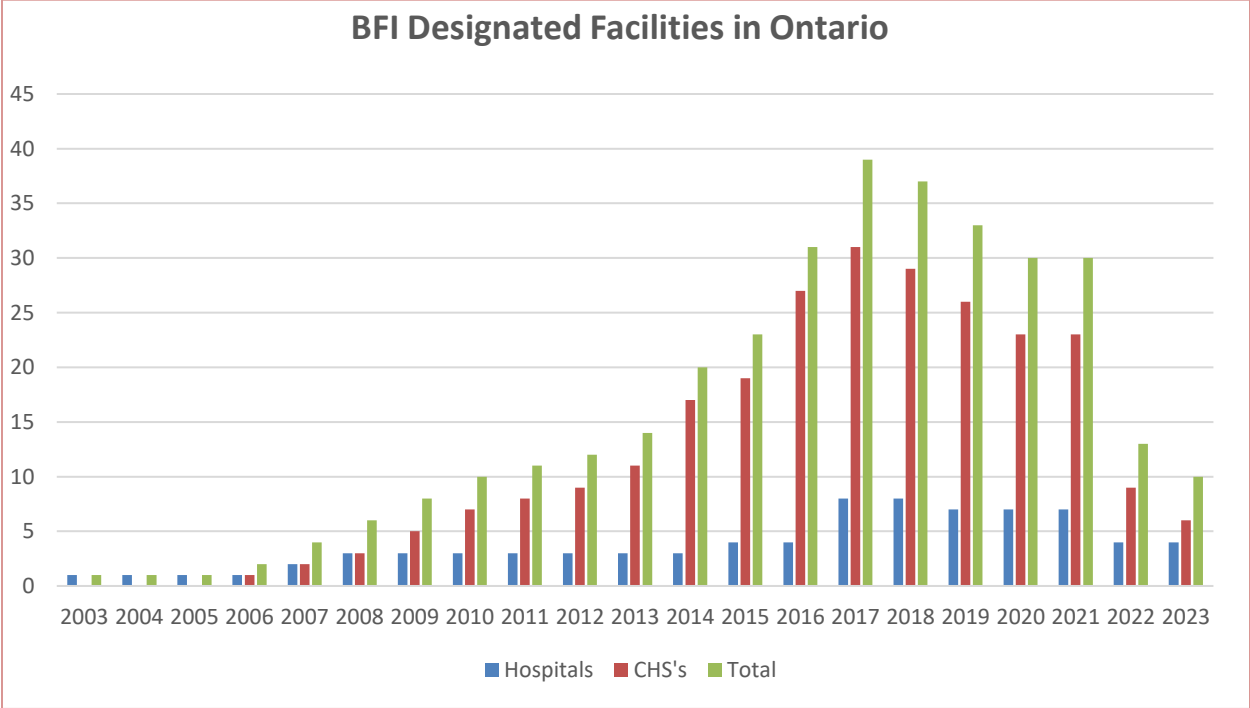
- The Zoom Meeting platform has allowed presentations to be recorded and made available to members on the website through YouTube. Tracked recording views has demonstrated engagement post presentation.
- To raise awareness of the Family Forum on our website, information was shared at membership meetings.
- BFION social media platforms shared supportive resources to recognize appropriate global and national commemorative days/weeks. The number of Facebook and Instagram Followers increased this year. Posts now are bilingual or have bilingual content.
- BFION representatives presented at the May BCC BFI Provincial/Territorial meeting, *Ontario's BFI Activities and Updates*.
- In January BFION responded to Public Health Ontario's (PHO) document *Q&A Considerations for Re-designation as Baby-Friendly*. A response letter was sent to PHO, all Medical Officers of Health, a briefing note to BFION membership and a Hot Topic presentation – *Is There Value in BFI Designation & Re-designation*.
- BFION executive held a one and a half day strategic planning session in June. We welcomed our new government representative to part of the meeting, and provided a presentation to familiarize her with the organization. Shilpa Gambhir, our government representative, has a position with the Ministry of Health as a Senior Policy and Program Advisor, Health Promotions & Prevention Policy & Programs Branch, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health.
- Support for National Breastfeeding Week (NBW), October 1 - 7, included a Hot Topic presentation at our September meeting, highlighting the BCC's NBW Toolkit (available in English and French) and Speaker Series. The theme for 2023 was "Enabling Breastfeeding: Working Together to Make a Difference". The speaker's series was free, with CERP's available to those that attended the live events Oct 2 – 5th. As part of the series, Sandra Hoy, researcher from Ontario, presented - *Cost of Suboptimal Breastfeeding in Ontario Study Update*. Positive feedback was shared from members who used the NBW Toolkit and attended the speaker series. The toolkit and recordings remain available on the [BCC's website](#).
- In 2022 a Membership Recruitment Working Group was created to broaden membership and enhance diversity, including members from First Nations, family health teams, physicians, midwives, doulas, mother-to-mother support and parents. Work was paused in 2023 as we waited on an update to the website page 'Become a Member' so that we could learn more about the demographics of our membership and evaluate the effectiveness of our recruitment efforts.
- A design for and draft of questions for a BFION membership survey was circulated to executive in December with the goal for refinement and distribution to members early in 2024.

BFI Designation

BFI designation and re-designation has continued to decline in Ontario and throughout Canada. In Ontario BFI designation and re-designation reached a peak during the years that BFI implementation and designation were part of the accountability agreement for public health units

and the government provided funding for the BFI Strategy for Ontario Project. Many organizations that are not working towards BFI designation /re-designation have indicated that they continue to be committed to implementing the practice standards of BFI. Presently, Ontario has 10 BFI-designated facilities listed, declining from a peak of 39 in 2017. The table below highlights the rise and drop in designated facilities in the past 20 years.

BFI Designation in Ontario Over Time



Changes To the Executive

At the 2023 AGM, Angie Manners was welcomed as the new Social Media Coordinator, Alanna Lakoff moved into the position as Co-Chair for the hospital sector and Louise Guthro moved into the Past Chair position. Shannon McLennon agreed to stay a second term as community Co-Chair. In September Alanna resigned as hospital Co-Chair and the community Co-Chair was granted a LOA for personal reasons. Margaret Sherratt (a former Co-Chair) agreed to support the Co-Chair position in the interim and Louise Guthro has assisted with Co-Chair responsibilities.

BFI Ontario Expo

Expo before the pandemic provided a critical way to engage and re-energize membership. With member organizations challenged by staffing shortages, resource issues including funding, and leadership stretched in meeting priorities, the biennial BFION Expo has not been held since 2017. The financial costs and the manpower capacity involved in organizing an in-person event and the likelihood of a decreased attendance led the Executive to decide to hold a ½ day virtual event in May/June 2024. Planning is underway.

Opportunities for Consideration

The recent engagement of an Ontario government representative as a participant in BFION and, BCC Provincial/Territorial meetings, presents an opportunity to collaboratively review data on breastfeeding success in alignment with national and global recommendations and BFI standards for care. The Global Breastfeeding Collective underlines the significant role that governments play in supporting breastfeeding, noting that, “*Policymakers and legislators play a vital role in creating enabling environments for breastfeeding and ensuring families are making informed decisions when feeding their children, therefore contributing to improved health outcomes for all*”. ([The Global Breastfeeding Collective Scorecard, 2019](#), p. 3)¹

Highlights from the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) for 2023

Board of Directors

- The BCC board of directors updated the BCC vision and mission statements and worked on a strategic plan for 2024-2029.
Vision: Families in Canada are supported to breastfeed. By 2030, 70% of children will be exclusively breastfed to 6 months.
Mission: We protect, promote, and support breastfeeding and informed infant feeding decisions by providing national leadership and guidance for the Baby-Friendly Initiative.
- The BCC’s Racial Health Equity Working Group developed a position statement on [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#). The board of directors voted that the working group will become a standing committee of the BCC.
- Heidi Boyd is representing the BCC on the joint working group that is updating Health Canada’s *Nutrition for the Healthy Term Infants*.

National BFI Quality Improvement Collaborative Project

- The BCC’s National BFI Quality Improvement Collaborative Project, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, will be ending in March 2024.
- Phase 2 began in April 2022 with the focus of providing coach-mentor guidance to participating hospitals and community health services. There were 53 hospitals and community health services across Canada in the program at the end of 2023.
- Manuscript titled, ["Promoting Maternal-Child Health by Increasing Breastfeeding Rates: A National Canadian Baby-Friendly Initiative Quality Improvement Collaborative Project"](#) sent to BMJ for review with goal of publication. Article published in January 2024.
- Public Health Agency of Canada accepted the BCC’s briefing note request for further funding and the money will need to be spent before the end of March 2024.
- Work is being done to engage Indigenous leaders and Indigenous specific projects.

BCC Code Advocacy Working Group

- Developed a survey about supporting Code implementation in Canada, a tracking tool for people that sent a letter to their Members of Parliament and an electronic form for tracking Code violations and encouraging the public to file a complaint with Canadian Food Inspections Agency.
- Met with Health Canada (HC) rep who was present at WHO meeting in Geneva (April 2023) and this person providing guidance for responding to the HC's proposed modernization of Divisions 24 and 25 of the Food and Drug Regulations [Consultation: Regulatory modernization of foods for special dietary use and infant foods - Canada.ca](#).

National Breastfeeding Week (NBW)

- In Canada, we celebrate NBW from October 1st to 7th each year, and use it as an opportunity to raise awareness about the vital importance of protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding in our communities. NBW was formally recognized in the calendar by the Government of Canada.
- A NBW toolkit was launched including resources for promotion of NBW for mainstream and social media, activities for health care providers, parent involvement, activities for children, and resources for facilities.
- During NBW a free virtual speaker's series was held with CERP's available to those that attended the live events. There were 387 attendees. Speakes included: Sandra Hoy (Ontario), Cost of Suboptimal Breastfeeding in Ontario - study update; Naida Hawkins (Saskatchewan) – Research with More Milk Sooner (i.e. prenatal milk expression); Janine McClure, Teresa Johnson, Claire Gallant (IWK Health Centre, Halifax, Nova Scotia) - Relationship Focused Care and Implications for Breastfeeding; and KathiLee Volk (Fort McMurray Public Health, Fort McMurray, Alberta), and Andrea Firmani (St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, B.C.) BFI Facility Leads Describing the Journey to BFI Designation. Evaluations showed positive feedback. The toolkit and recordings remain available on the [BCC's website](#).

BFI Standards and Assessment

- The Assessment Committee continued to pilot the electronic interview guides during Pre-assessment site visits and External Assessments.
- Hospital and community chart audit tools and staff and patient/client survey tools developed, piloted and available on the BCC's website. Training on the use of these tools was provided to coach-mentors, assessors/assessor candidates and facilities.
- Extensions have continued to be granted to facilities pursuing BFI designation/redesignation due to the impact of the pandemic.
- Reasons provided by facilities for not pursuing BFI designation/redesignation have been collated and discussed. The Assessment Committee has also been gathering information about the assessment process in Quebec and other countries.
- Assessors and assessor candidates received a refresher in September 2023.

Social Media Presence

- The BCC increased activity on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Website can be found at: <https://breastfeedingcanada.ca/en>.

BFION Executive Reports

Website Report – Karen Frith

BFION's desktop and mobile-friendly website can be accessed at www.bfontario.ca.

BFION is finalizing changes to the website *Become a Member/Renew* pages. The process to become or renew membership will be more user-friendly. BFION will begin to collect some information about the demographics of membership, to be able to provide more targeted support and information to members.

As a member of BFION you are added to BFION Mailchimp mailing list and as members to our website. Through this, the membership receives information about meetings, upcoming events, news and resources. The membership also has access to our members-only pages which include resources, meeting minutes, Hot Topic recordings, Manage My Profile, Executive Position Nomination Form and other BFION related documents.

BFION members are encouraged to visit the *Home* page regularly to find the most current news, and upcoming meeting information.

BFION has a display banner available for use at events to increase awareness of BFI and BFION. A request form for the banner and a BFION information sheet can be found in the *Members* drop down list.

Hot Topic recordings for each meeting are available in the *Members* drop down list and on our *Hot Topics* page. The links will open to the BFION [YouTube page](#). Don't miss this opportunity for learning!

The *Family Forum* was accessed with one family experience this year. Ontario families have the opportunity here to share their experiences with prenatal, postnatal and young childcare, especially related to infant feeding, at Ontario hospitals and community health services. The comments give insight into what is happening in the province. BFION provides a response with a look at how BFI can help to ensure excellent care for families. Anyone is welcome to share their experience. All information is kept anonymous.

BFION is always looking for any new or updated BFI related resources that are being used in facilities and the community. If your agency is willing to share a resource, send an email and it will be included in *Resources* section which can be accessed in the *Members* drop down list.

A way to connect with BFION is through the *Contact* tab on the top of website. Questions and sharing of ideas are always welcome.

To share educational opportunities, either in-person or virtual, contact us and we can let members know about them.

Contact Karen Frith at info@bfontario.com.

Opportunities for Consideration

We are currently recruiting a Website Administrator for the BFION Executive to take over the management of the website. This is a great opportunity to learn more about BFION and the BFI. The Website Administrator works closely with our Membership Coordinator to ensure that all our members' privileges are kept up-to-date.

Communications Report – Laura Dueck

One of BFION's goals is to facilitate the accurate and timely sharing of information with members regarding breastfeeding and the Baby-Friendly Initiative. The Mailchimp online platform is used as a tool to reach all our members at one time with each email.

Mailchimp assisted BFION in communicating with 331 email subscribers (members) in 2023. This number is down from 375 in the previous year. The number of emails sent out to our membership in 2023 was 36 which was consistent with the number of emails sent in 2022. Email content included information that supported our regular membership meetings (e.g. agendas, minutes), promoted educational opportunities, and shared new research and resources/tools. Although it was not commonly used for this, it has also been an effective method for individual members to ask questions to the broader membership group (e.g. If a member has a practice question or is looking for a resource).

The Mailchimp metrics show that member engagement is at or higher than the industry average, with our email open rate range at 32% – 62%, and average open rate at 38%. The click rates for BFION emails ranged from 6% - 41% which reflects the percentage of members who clicked on links within the emails. Click rates were typically higher when the email was sharing information about educational opportunities, resources/tools, or new research.

Opportunities for Consideration

Moving into 2024, we are recruiting a Communications Coordinator for the BFION Executive. Alongside efforts to onboard the new coordinator, continued focus will be on strategies to increase engagement with BFION through our communications' channels.

BFI Assessment Coordinator Report – Marg La Salle

Some hospitals and community health services in Ontario continue to implement *The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding in Canada* with the goal of achieving BFI designation or redesignation. The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) granted extensions to facilities that needed to slow their BFI work due to the demands of the pandemic. At present one community health service and one hospital in Ontario are in the Pre-assessment phase of their BFI journey and actively working to prepare for External Assessment. There have been no BFI designations or redesignations in the province since the start of the pandemic.

The BCC moved into Phase 2 of the BFI Collaborative Project early in 2022. In Phase 2, participating hospitals and community health services received 1:1 assistance with the implementation of the BFI Standards from one or more coach-mentors. Five people from Ontario were coach-mentors and three of these were parent partners with the coach-mentor program. Six hospitals and 2 community health services from Ontario participated in the coach mentor program. This phase of the coach-mentor program will be transitioning in March 2024.

The list of BFI designated facilities was updated in October 2023. At that time Ontario had 4 hospitals and 6 community health services that are BFI designated. Many of the previously designated hospitals and community health services in the province have indicated an intent to uphold BFI principles and standards even though they are not re-designating.

All assessment work is done through the Assessment Committee of the BCC. Karen Frith and Marg La Salle are Co-chairs of the BCC's Assessment Committee. Ontario currently has 2 lead assessors, 1 assessor who is being mentored as a lead assessor, 7 assessors and 1 assessor candidate.

Kathy O'Grady continues her role as the BCC international delegate to the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Network (BFHI Network).

Marg La Salle and the BFION Co-Chairs have regularly attended the BCC's P/T Committee meetings. Kathy O'Grady, Marg La Salle, Karen Frith, Linda Young, Angie Manners and Yolande Lawson are members of the BCC's Board of Directors.

Advocacy Report – Joan Bueckert

In January, 2023 a letter was sent by the BFION executive to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care asking them to appoint a representative to BFION. In March, BFION learned that two contact people had been appointed. However, only one replied to invitations to participate in BFION meetings. Shilpa Gambhir, Senior Policy and Program Advisor of the Health Promotion & Prevention Policy & Programs Branch is presently the BFION contact person at the Ministry. She attended the BFION AGM in April, and has attended a number of BFION membership meetings as an observer. In June, at the BFION executive planning day, the team had the opportunity to virtually meet with Shilpa, sharing a presentation, and a brief discussion. The team was informed that her role would be as an observer for the time being. She participated in the virtual education sessions offered by BCC during NBW. Shilpa has joined BFION on the BCC BFI Provincial-Territorial Committee. Now that BFION has a contact person at the Ministry of Health it is hoped there will be more opportunities to advocate on behalf of all perinatal families in Ontario.

Opportunities for Consideration

“Governments play a fundamental role in protecting the health of women and children through improving policies and programmes that support breastfeeding” ([Global Breastfeeding Scorecard 2019, p.1](#)).¹

The BFION Executive is looking forward to opportunities to engage with Shilpa to support collaboration and change moving forward.

Membership Report – Linda Young

Membership Overview

- Both individual and group memberships were available in 2023. There was a total of 73 memberships comprised of 47 individual and 26 group memberships. Although there were a few new memberships, this was an overall decrease in memberships by 10.
- The PayPal system is used for direct payment through a PayPal account or use of a credit card. The auto renewal process has worked well during the past year and difficulties have been resolved through referrals to the Website Administrator and the Treasurer to assist

with system navigation or payment method. Payment through cheques and invoicing continues to be provided upon request for a few organizational memberships.

- Google Docs and Mailchimp were used for maintaining the membership registrations. Lists were adjusted through direct requests from organizations, as well as by individuals who unsubscribed themselves from Mailchimp when emails from BFION were no longer relevant to their organizational role.
- Over the past year the priority of the Membership Recruitment Working Group, chaired by Marg LaSalle, has been advising on website revisions to facilitate process improvements for both payment and membership registration for new and renewed memberships.
- The reports provided by Mailchimp now focus on detailed information about email responsiveness including the rate of opening emails and click rates. The greatest response rates related to the More Milk education sessions and Breastfeeding Week events. The new data will allow BFION Executive to track and learn about the content that has the greatest response rate, information that can be used to identify content valued most by members.

Membership Fee Structure

The options of individual and group memberships were available in 2023 and a few new members joined BFION in each. Group memberships remained flexible to change throughout the year as organizations experienced staffing changes to BFI roles. The rates for group memberships are designed to offer cost savings to encourage the development of BFI implementation teams wherever possible.

In addition, group memberships support collaboration and idea sharing through enhanced access to information and resources from provincial and national leaders in BFI Implementation. The fee structure for BFION memberships in 2023, was consistent with rates for previous years (see table below).

Overview of BFION Membership Fee Structure

Membership Category	Cost
Individual	\$20
Group A (2-5 members)	\$50
Group B (6-10 members)	\$100
Group C (11-24 members)	\$250
Group D (25+ members)	\$400

Memberships Described

The table outlining Individual versus Group Memberships shows the change in memberships by size over the past five years. Although the total number of memberships remained consistent in 2020 and 2021, in 2022 there was an overall decrease in memberships by five. Most recently, in 2023, there was a further decline in total memberships by 10, comprised of a decrease in individual memberships by three and a decrease in group memberships by seven.

Individual vs Group Membership

Membership Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Individual	56	45	50	50	47
Group	45	43	38	33	26
Total Memberships	101	88	88	83	73

The table below further describes the membership changes in relation to Group Type by Size. In 2023, the decline in group memberships consisted of a decrease in Group A memberships by six (two hospitals, two health units and two CHCs), and a decrease in Group C memberships by one public health unit. There were no memberships in Group D, the largest group size, and only one membership remaining in Group C, reflecting the shrinking commitment of resources to support BFI implementation.

Membership Distribution Based on Size 2019-2023

Membership Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Individual	56	45	50	50	47
Group A (2-5 members)	34	35	31	26	20
Group B (6-10 members)	9	6	5	5	5
Group C (11-25 members)	1	1	1	2	1
Group D (26+ members)	1	1	1	0	0
Total Memberships	101	88	88	83	73

The five-year decline in memberships represents a 16% reduction in individual memberships and a 42 % decline in group memberships, with an overall decline of 28% in total memberships.

The continued decline is concerning, as health care organizations struggle with increased service volumes, strained financial and staffing resources, and expectations that resources are refocused to address changing government-defined priority areas. The result is that organizations are assigning fewer resources to implement Baby-Friendly Initiative standards with little evidence available that care provided to breastfeeding families successfully supports Health Canada's recommendation that exclusive breastfeeding be sustained to 6 months of age.

Memberships by Sector

A broad group of professionals and lay people contribute to breastfeeding support and success in Ontario. The tables below provide a snapshot of BFION individual and group memberships by

sector for the last five years. Unfortunately, there remain a number of individual memberships for which sector identification is unknown, as the member registration process was not collecting member profile information for the past few years. It is expected that completion of the website revisions in progress will enhance data quality in future.

Individual Membership Distribution by Sector 2019-2023

Sector	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Public Health	6	6	9	11	11
Hospital	8	6	9	6	6
CHC	4	3	1	1	0
FHT	2	1	2	3	4
Midwives	2	1	1	1	0
BF Organization	10	13	17	16	14
Colleges/Universities	5	4	3	1	1
First Nations	0	0	0	2	1
Unknown	19	11	8	9	10
Total	56	45	50	50	47*

**NB – Total for Sector member representation in 2023 is 47 as one individual works at a hospital that is a First Nations organization.*

Group Membership Distribution by Sector 2019-2023

Sector	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Public Health	22	22	16	19	15
Hospital	11	11	12	6	5
CHC	5	4	4	3	1
FHT	2	2	2	2	2
Midwives	0	0	0	0	0
BF Organization	4	3	3	3	3
Colleges/Universities	0	0	1	0	0
First Nations	1	1	0	0	0
Total	45	43	38	33	26

In 2023 there was at least one member from every sector identified, except midwives. The loss of midwifery representation in the individual members has been gradual over the past few years. Similar to last year, breastfeeding organizations (n=14) and public health units (n= 11) had the largest number of individual members, whereas public health (n= 15) and hospitals (n=6) have the greatest number of group memberships.

Individual memberships decreased by two in the Breastfeeding Organizations category and by one in the First Nations category. The greatest loss of group memberships was from Public Health (n=4). Community Health Centres decreased by two group memberships and hospital memberships decreased by one. It is recommended that the Membership Working Group considers the above changes in sector representation as they pursue ways for enhancing BFION membership and maintaining member diversity.

Consistent with previous reports, BFION has maintained geographical representation from across the province with the greatest number of memberships being drawn from urban areas including Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton.

Opportunities for Consideration

The presentation of the membership data suggests a few areas for review and consideration as follows:

- The new data available from Mailchimp should be monitored for responsiveness to various emails and resources and used to identify how to better engage members and enhance the value of membership in BFION.
- Collaboration between the Membership Recruitment Working Group and the Website Administrator has resulted in recently implemented changes to the BFION website that will enhance registration and payment processes, as well as provide data to better understand members and their needs. It will be important to develop a process for organizing and presenting the new data so that trends may be monitored and used to enhance membership and involvement in BFI Implementation.
- There remains an opportunity to reflect on how Parent Partners might be engaged in the work of BFION to identify ways to enhance the implementation and sustainability of BFI best practices and standards with Ontario healthcare organizations.

Social Media Report – Angie Manners

In 2023, BFION was active on three social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

BFION had 47 Facebook posts and stories with 1600 Reaches. The Following increased from 257 to 276 people. The number of Reaches is significantly lower (70.9%) than in 2022 where there were 8259. The posts Engagements dropped significantly from 370 to 42 and the link Clicks also declined from 127 to 42.

BFION Tweeted only once in 2023. The following grew from 97 to 101 accounts. Activity on Twitter (now X) was minimal in 2023 compared to previous years.

BFION now has 57 Followers on Instagram. The posts and stories had 255 Reaches and a total of 33 profile visits. The number of Reactions and shares is not available to us until we reach over 100 Followers. Our hashtag is #BFIONtario.

Posts created, focused on various topics such as Nurses Week, Mother's Day, Father's Day, National Breastfeeding Week and World Breastfeeding Week. We shared breastfeeding promotion tools and reports as well as events and opportunities from partner organizations including the BCC, WHO and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

In the latter part of 2023, the posts were bilingual or had bilingual content.

A new Social Media coordinator was onboarded mid year which may account for the decrease in posts and Follower engagement. The goal for 2024 is to be more active on Facebook and Instagram to continue increasing our Reach and Engagement as well as collaborate with partners by sharing content and events as appropriate.

Social Media Activity - Facebook

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Posts	57	48	90	47
Shared Posts		107	82	42
Followers (Page likes)	140	189	257	276
Engagement (Likes and reactions)		328	370	42
Reach		13,709	8,259	1,600
Link Clicks		826	127	35
Comments		46	30	Data unavailable*
Visits				408

*Data unavailable as more followers are needed for Meta Business Suite to provide this information while respecting privacy of those following the accounts.

Facebook Demographics

Gender	Ages		Top 5 cities	Top 5 countries
Females - 97%	18-24 - 0.8%	45-54 - 20.6%	Ottawa (12.0%)	Canada (90.9%)
Males - 2%	25-34 - 22.1%	55-64 - 11.5%	Toronto (6.2%)	US (3.6%)
	35-44 - 37.5%	65+ - 7.5%	Hamilton (4.3%)	UK (1.4%)
			Brockville (2.2%)	Portugal (1.1%)
			Gatineau (2.2%)	Egypt (0.7%)

Social Media Activity – Twitter (now X)

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Followers	84	89	97	101
Following	265	268	263	261
Tweets	33	15	12	1
Retweets	14	66	12	0
Likes			29	1
Mentions		9	9	0

Social Media Activity - Instagram

(New 08/21)	2021	2022	2023
Posts	36	40	18
Stories			0
Followers	10	47	57
Following		7	
Reach	113	261	255
Likes and Reactions	12	66	No data
Share	2	4	0
Profile Visits	24	52	33

Once we reach 100 Instagram followers, we will have access to demographic information as noted for Facebook.

Opportunities for Consideration

- Create stories and reels for Facebook and Instagram as these typically generate more interest and traffic to our pages.
- Create a calendar of topics to ensure we are posting timely topics more frequently.
- Consider creating a LinkedIn page to replace X and gain more Followers.
- Review membership survey to gain insight into social media ideas and needs.
- Identify factors that could have contributed to a lower audience reach than previous years and address as necessary.

Financial Report – Hiltrud Dawson

Financial Overview

Overall, BFION remains in a good financial position. At the moment, the only income has come from membership fees. Membership income decreased slightly in the past year. Our income was more than enough to offset our modest expenses. There has been no income or expenses related to an in-person networking event since 2017. There has been no cost for travel to present BFI designation plaques. Since 2020, our expenses have focused on online communications (Zoom, Survey Monkey, website).

For the year 2022-23 (May 1, 2022 - April 30, 2023), BFION's financial documents were examined. Taxes filed by the accounting firm, T4Tax Services Inc., with no taxes to pay. The firm had a modest fee increase in 2023.

Finances Described

In the past, BFION reported finances according to the fiscal year for the corporation (May 1 to April 30 each year). To align with other reports and make it more immediate and relevant, reports now cover the previous calendar year.

2023 Income:

Item	Amount	Additional Explanation
Membership Payments via Direct Deposit, e-Transfer and Cheque	150.00	
Membership Payments via PayPal	2,290.00	
Total Income	\$2,440.00	

Occasional e-transfers have been accepted. BCC offers the option to pay by e-transfer. It would be advantageous for BFION to offer e-transfer as an alternative to PayPal payments. It would need to be set up on a more permanent basis.

2023 Expenses:

Item	Amount	Additional Explanation
PayPal fees	87.94	
Teleconferences/Zoom	226.00	
Survey Monkey	461.04	
Website	276.85	
Executive expenses	32.10	
Tax services	361.60	
Total Expenses	\$1,445.53	

Payments of expenses were made via cheque, PayPal and e-transfers. Again, it would be advantageous to have e-transfers set up as an easily accessible option.

Income and Expenses Comparison	2022	2023	Difference
Income	2,950.00	2,440.00	-410.00
Expenses	1,824.29	1,445.53	-378.76
Difference	\$1,125.71	\$994.47	

Although BFION's income was less (13%) in 2023, the expenses were also less (21%).

On December 31, 2023, our accounts held the following amounts:

Assets	Amount
Bank of Montreal	25,619.18
PayPal	3,580.78
Total	\$29,199.96

Asset Comparison	2022	2023	Difference
Bank of Montreal	26,600.75	25,619.18	-981.57
PayPal	1,634.72	3,580.78	1,946.06
Total Assets	\$28,235.47	\$29,199.96	\$964.49

Budget for 2024

In the past, BFION has not prepared a budget for each year, but has vetted upcoming expenses at executive meetings. A budget has been used for larger financial projects, e.g., BFI Expos.

Opportunities for Consideration

BFION has sufficient funds to consider other needs, tools or resources that would benefit members, strengthen the position of BFION in the province, and support BFI Implementation.

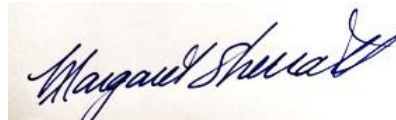
BFION considers what value individuals and groups gain from being members. The results of the recent membership survey and our financial status will assist the executive in making these decisions.

The BFION executive would like to thank each of its members who tirelessly supported the health and well-being of Ontario families and communities this past year. BFION will continue to do the same by protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding through the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Initiative. We will continue to advocate for these evidence-based, best practices in Ontario, look for opportunities to influence change and increase engagement.

Respectfully,



Louise Guthro, RN (retired), IBCLC
BFION Acting Co-Chair Hospital



Margaret Sherratt RN BScN IBCLC
BFION Interim Co-Chair

References

¹ Global Breastfeeding Collective. Global Breastfeeding Scorecard, 2019; Increasing Commitment to Breastfeeding through Funding and Improved Policies and Programs. (Web July 23, 2019) Available: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/WHO-NMH-NHD-19.22> (Accessed 7 March 2024)

² Public Health Agency of Canada. Canada's Breastfeeding Progress Report 2022. Available: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/src/data/breastfeeding/PHAC%20-%20Breastfeeding%20Report%202022.pdf> (Accessed 8 March 2024)