

## Presenter Disclosures

**Karen Meehan**

(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

**“No relationships to disclose”**

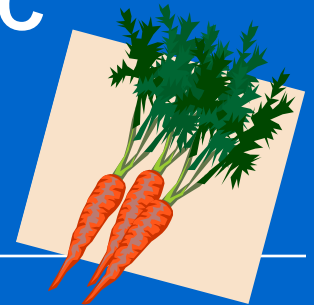
---



# WIC, The New Food Package and Breastfeeding.....

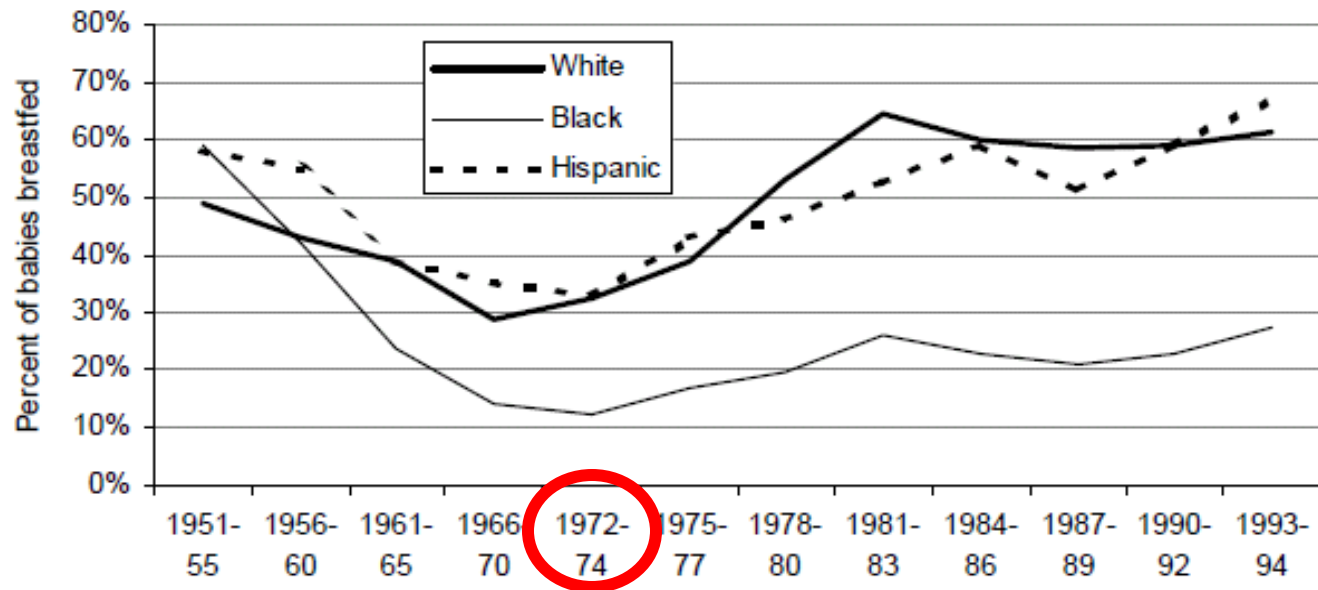
## The story of the carrot

**Karen Meehan, MPH, RD, IBCLC**  
**Shannon E. Whaley, PhD**



## Exhibit 1.2

### Breastfeeding Initiation Rates by Race, 1951-55 through 1993-94



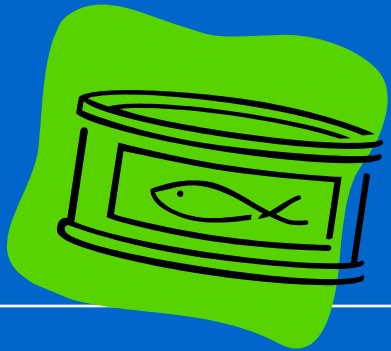
Sources: Data for 1951-55 through 1966-70: Hirschman and Hendershot. *Trends in Breast Feeding Among American Mothers*. Vital and Health Statistics, Series 23, No. 3. National Center for Health Statistics, 1979.

Data for 1972-74 through 1993-94: *Health, United States, 1998*. National Center for Health Statistics.

**WIC program pilot begins in 1972 and becomes permanent in 1974**

# The WIC Food Package incentive for breastfeeding...

- From 1993 to 2008 the special “extra” food in the fully breastfeeding package were:
  - 2 lbs carrots, 4<sub>(6 oz)</sub> cans tuna fish, 1 extra lb of cheese
  - Results: do not know the impact on the fully breastfeeding package issuance



# Improved Food Package for all women

- \$10 check to buy fruit and vegetables
- Whole grain cereal only
- Reduced or nonfat milk only



# WIC Policy Change (Oct 1, 2009)



- No routine provision of formula in the first 30 days for breastfeeding mothers
- Individual assessment of mother and baby for breastfeeding concerns and problems, and for requests for supplemental formula
- Enhanced food package for breastfeeding mothers

# Comparison

## Fully BF

### Food for 1 YEAR

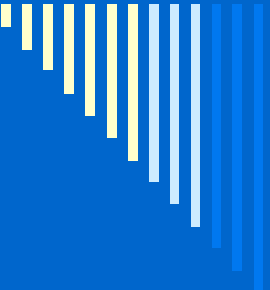
- \$10 check to buy Fruit and Vegetables
- 36 oz whole grain cereal
- 5 gallons reduced or nonfat milk
- 2 lb cheese, 2 doz eggs, 144 oz juice, 1 lb PB, 1 lb beans
- 1 lb. whole grain (bread, tortillas, grain)
- 30 oz canned tuna, salmon or sardines

## Not BF

### Food for only 6 months

- \$10 check to buy Fruit and Vegetables
- 36 oz whole grain cereal
- 3 gallons reduced or nonfat milk
- 1 lb cheese, 1 doz eggs, 96 oz juice, 1 lb PB or beans





# Food Package for Infant 6 -12 months



Fully BF Infants

Partial BF/Formula

4 oz jar of Baby

Fruit and Vegetables

64

32

2.5 oz jar of Baby

Meat

31

0

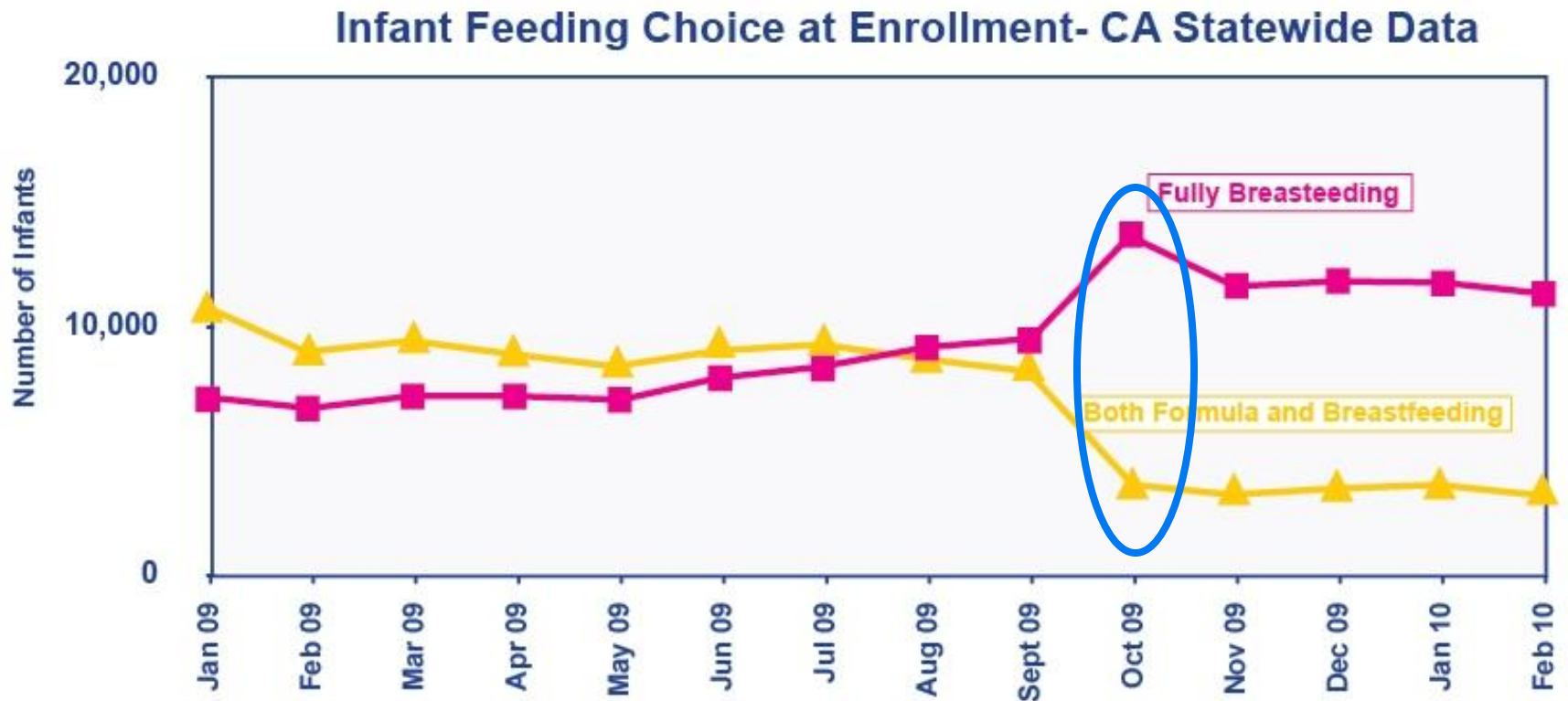
The total value for the fully breastfeeding mother and infant package in CA is over \$75 per month.

---



# Results of the Food Package Change

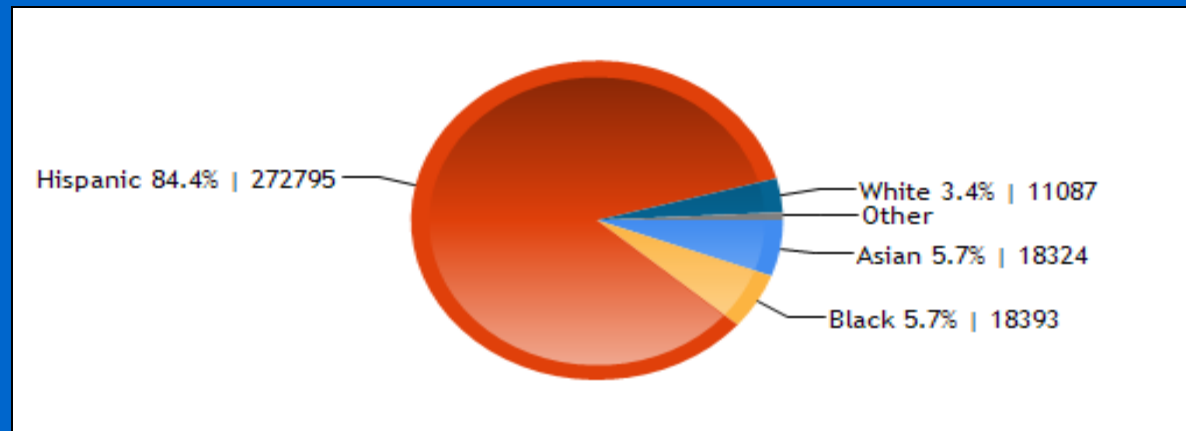
(at Newborn enrollment)



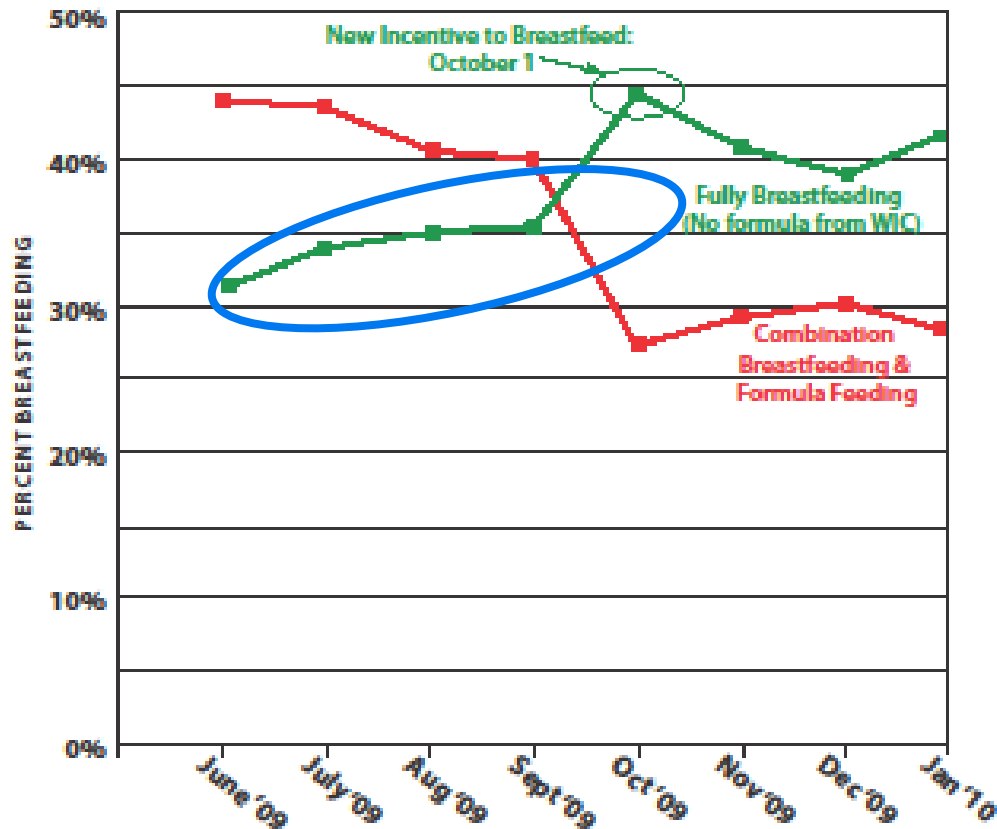
# PHFE WIC ...who are we?



- Largest Local Agency WIC program in US
- Represent 20% of the entire State of CA WIC participation
- Caseload of 326,000
- Located in Los Angeles and Orange County



## Improved Breastfeeding Rates with New WIC Foods



BREASTFEEDING RATES AT NEWBORN ENROLLMENT INTO WIC

PHFE-WIC data Los Angeles and Orange Counties, California June 2009–January, 2010  
–5000 infants per month

PHFE-WIC

A large local  
agency data  
mirrors  
CA Statewide  
data



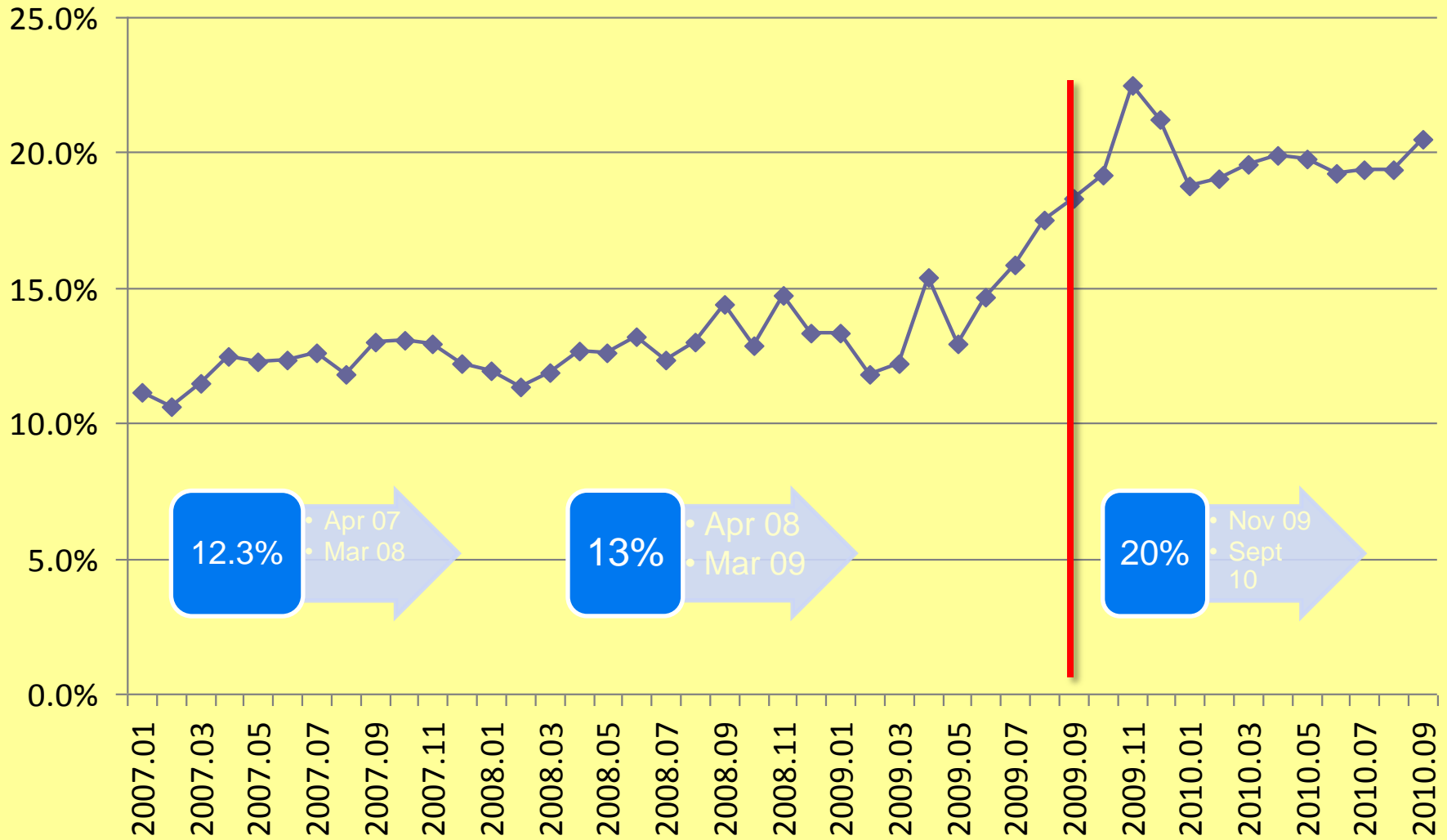
# WHY the upward trend before the package changed?



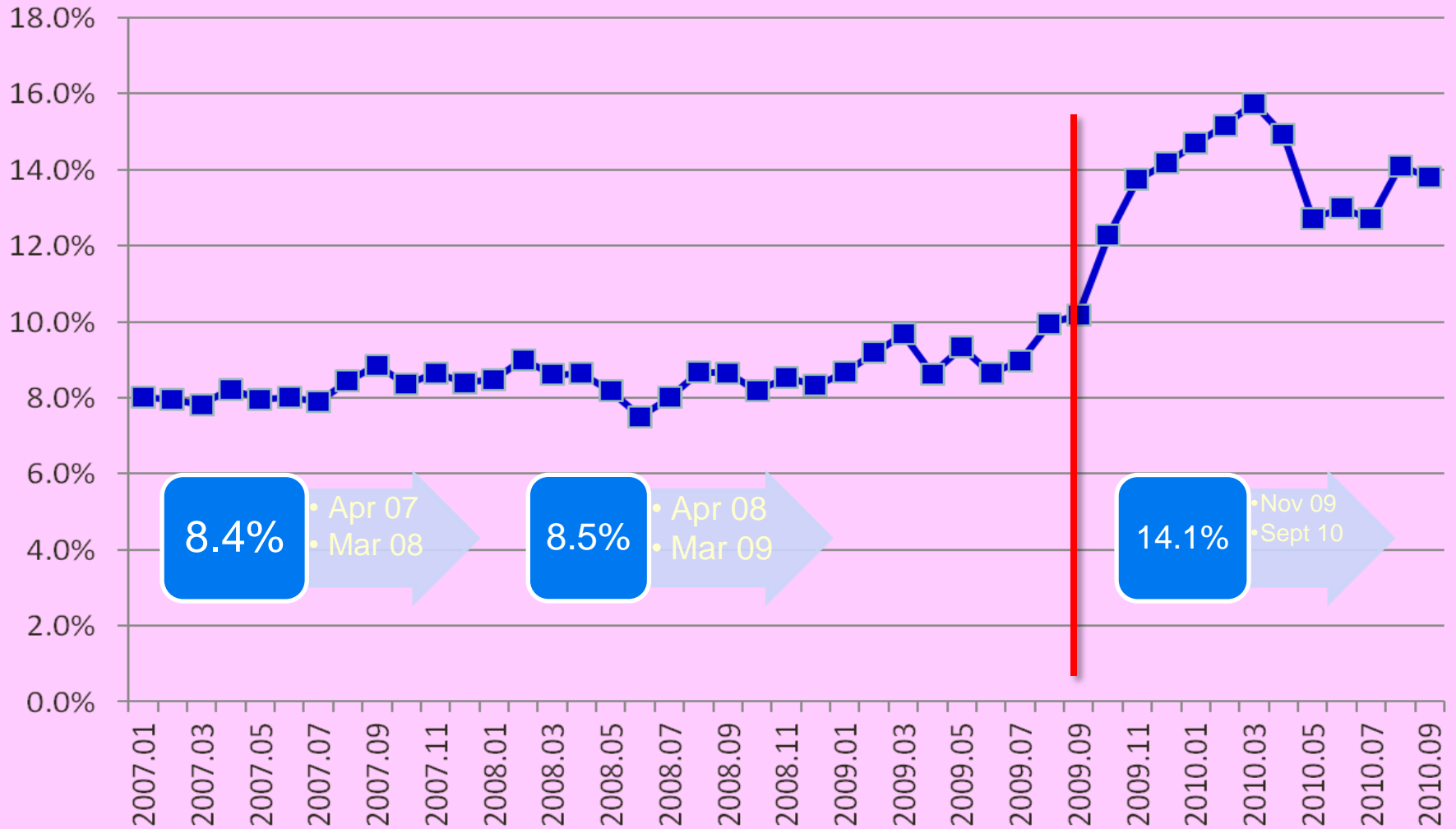
- State wide staff training that started 9 months prior to the change
- State wide education for WIC participants that began about 6 months prior to the change
- What about duration data?



# Exclusive Breastfeeding @ 2 Months



# Breastfeeding at 6 Months



---



# Conclusions



- Policy changes in the WIC program positively influenced behavior change in selecting a breastfeeding food package.
  - Education about the upcoming changes to the WIC program influenced behavior BEFORE the actual policy change.
-

# Survey of WIC participants

- Background
- Questions:
  - Attitudes about the food package as an incentive for breastfeeding
  - Formula usage, breastfeeding knowledge, and hospital practices





# Survey methodology

English and Spanish speaking mothers with infants 1-12 months old were interviewed by phone for ~20 minutes.

Stratified random sample by feeding type (fully & partially BF and fully formula feeding)



- Aug/Sept 2010
- N = 2042
- Field Research Corp made phone calls
- Cooperation rate – 88%
- Response rate – 43%

# WIC's position on Breastfeeding



WIC encourages moms to BF	90.4%
WIC encourages BF without using formula	54%
WIC encourages moms to do both (breastfeed and formula feed)	34.5%
WIC encourages moms to feed formula	21%

\*Each mother was asked to respond to each question

# Plan to feed infant (intention)

Knew they would ONLY give breastmilk 45.3%

Thought they might breastfeed 13.3%

Knew they would feed formula AND  
breastmilk 4.8%

Knew they would only feed formula 4.7%

Didn't know how they would feed 1.5%



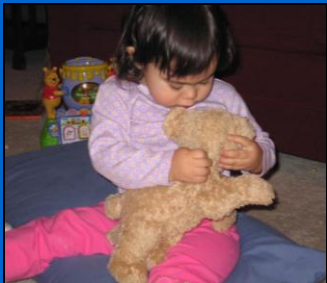
# Did they take formula from WIC?

## Took Formula from WIC

Knew they would ONLY give breastmilk 27.7%

Knew they would feed formula AND  
breastmilk 86.3%

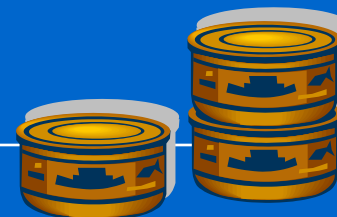
Thought they might breastfeed 88.0%



# Is the Food Package an incentive for breastfeeding?



It's now a bigger carrot.





# It depends....



## Moms not taking formula

- 84% said Food Package had no influence
- 12% said Food Package had **BIG** influence
- 4% said Food Package had **small** influence



## Moms taking **SOME** formula (1 - 4 cans)

- 62% said Food Package had no influence
- 24% said Food Package had **BIG** influence
- 14% said Food Package had **small** influence



# Conclusions

Policy changes in the WIC program positively influenced behavior change in selecting a breastfeeding food package.

For some mothers, the WIC Food Package does work as an incentive for breastfeeding.

WIC is perceived as supportive of breastfeeding.

Given only half of women perceived WIC's emphasis on EXCLUSIVE breastfeeding, there is opportunity to improve efforts to promote this message.





WIC can and will continue to find ways to sweeten the carrot and utilize the stick...in efforts to better support breastfeeding.



---



# Contact Information

- Shannon E. Whaley, PhD  
[shannon@phfewic.org](mailto:shannon@phfewic.org)

- Karen Meehan, MPH, RD, IBCLC  
[karen@phfewic.org](mailto:karen@phfewic.org)

