

Infant Formula Freebies from the Hospital Regional Trends among 13 States

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Background

- Hospitals given out formula sample packs since 1960s
- Practice prevalent across the US
- Mounting pressure to decrease all types of samples in hospitals

Background

- **Most influential groups oppose this:**
 - AAP, ACOG, OWH/DHHS, GAO, WHO
- **CDC*:** “disproportionately negative impact on mothers...at high risk for early termination of breastfeeding.”

*The CDC guide to Breastfeeding Interventions (Shealy):
<http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/resources/guide.htm>

Background

- *Cochrane*: 9 RCTs/ 3,730 US women: exclusive breastfeeding “reduced at all time points.”
- *Lancet*: 448 women; recipients less likely to breastfeed at 1m (78% vs 84%, $p = 0.07$); more likely to introduce solids by 2m (18% vs 10%, $p = 0.01$)

Objectives

- In 13 states + DC (HRSA regions I - III):
 - Catalog % of hospitals distributing formula company sample packs
 - Catalog % of new mothers exposed to sample pack distribution
- States: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT, NY, NJ, DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV

Methods

- Oct. 2006 - Apr. 2007
- Obtained hospital lists from state organizations
- RA called maternity service at each hospital

Methods

- Respondent asked “Does your hospital give out a formula-company diaper discharge bag to new mothers?”
- “No” answer rechecked with lactation or nurse manager

Results

Region I: New England

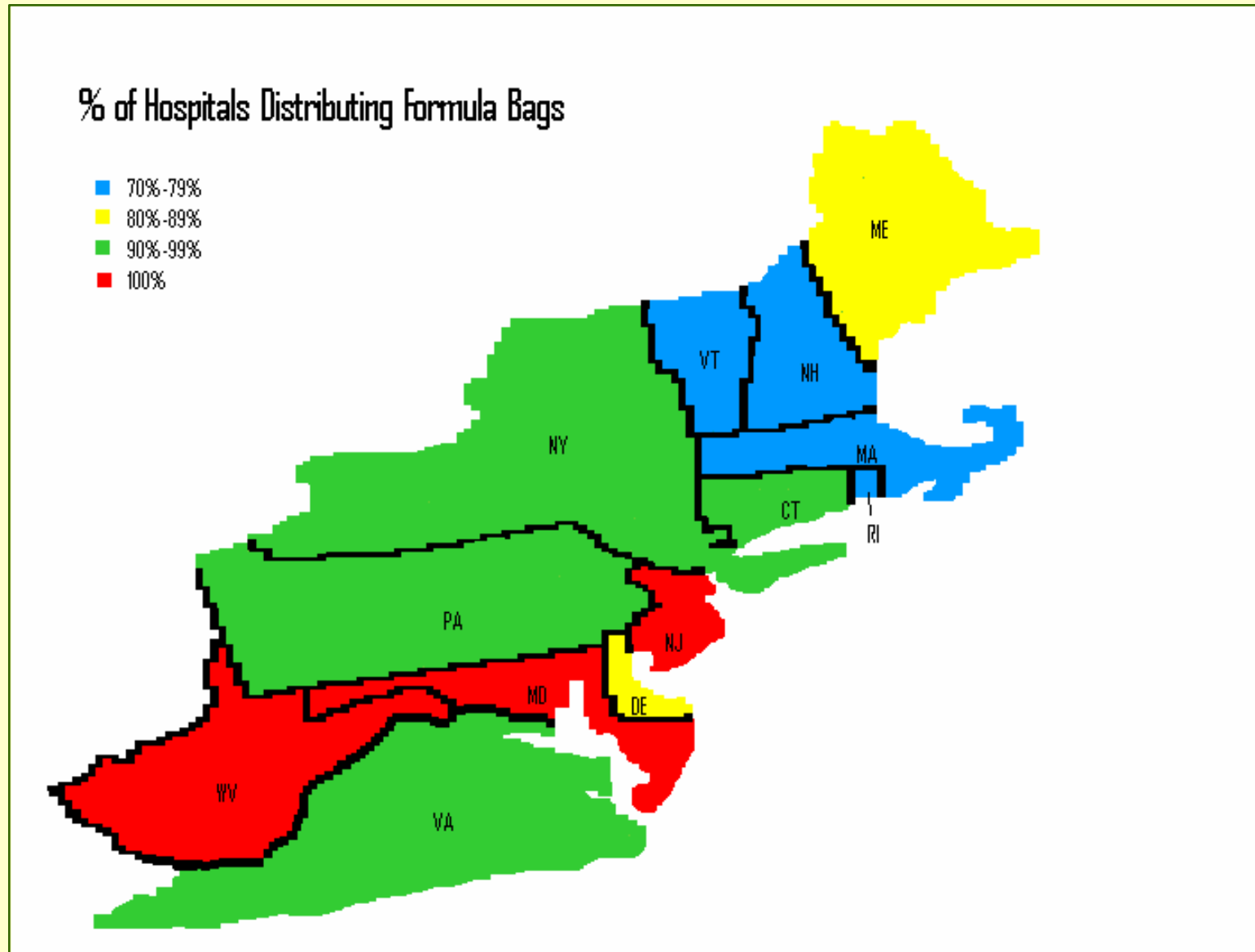
State	Hospitals (%)	Pop. %
VT:	9/12 (75)	59
MA:	37/51 (73)	63
NH:	19/27 (70)	82
CT:	28/30 (93)	86
RI:	5/7 (71)	90
ME:	29/35 (83)	90

Results

Regions II & III

State	Hospitals (%)	Pop. %
NY	226/245 (92)	83
VA	52/54 (96)	96
DE	6/7 (86)	99
PA	116/118 (98)	99
DC	6/6 (100)	100
MD	36/36 (100)	100
NJ	69/69 (100)	100
WV	35/35 (100)	100

Results



Discussion



“Ban the Bags” Campaign

- Launch/booth at ILCA 2006 conference
- Press release
- [www:banthebags.org](http://www.banthebags.org)
- info@banthebags.org



Why are hospitals marketing baby formula?

A photograph of a grey diaper bag and two baby bottles on the left, and a baby lying on its stomach on a blue blanket on the right.

**Give the Bag
the Boot!**

The logo for the Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition, featuring a blue square with a white figure and the text "Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition" and "www.massbf.org".

Hospitals should market health, and nothing else.

Conclusion

- Hospital distribution of formula sample packs predominates
- Some evidence of regional trends
- Higher proportions of women affected in the DC area