The Baby Friendly Hospital Task Force was formed in September 2008 as an interdisciplinary venue for promoting breastfeeding for all mothers who gave birth at Jefferson Hospital. The primary purpose of the group is to create a pro-breastfeeding atmosphere at Jefferson that would help us meet the criteria to become a Baby Friendly Hospital.

Dr Esther Chung and Dr. Judith Turow started the interdisciplinary group along with Terri O’Brien Nurse Manager of Parent Education and the lactation consultants in an effort to promote communication between physicians and nurses about the importance of breastfeeding. Another purpose of the group was to establish a clear message to both healthcare professionals and new mothers that breastfeeding is the best option for providing nutrition to newborns. At the group’s initial meeting the Baby Friendly Hospital Task Force created its vision: Creating Healthy Humans Through Good Nutrition. The purpose established was: To initiate the journey toward a Baby Friendly environment in the prenatal period, through the delivery room, the nursery and continuing seamlessly through the first year of life. Each stage of development builds on the last.

Since its inception the interdisciplinary group has grown to include delivery and post partum nurses, obstetricians, neonatologists, nurse practitioners, a family practice physician, residents, and a representative from the Breast Center. Accomplishments to date include: initiating a nursing mothers’ support group, increasing the number of lactation lounges available for pumping mothers at Jefferson, removing formula company advertisement from the nursery, increasing awareness among staff in the intensive care nursery about the importance of breast feeding premature infants, increasing the adoption of breastfeeding in the intensive care nursery, supporting delivery room nurses to provide an opportunity for all mothers to place their baby skin to skin after delivery, initiating a breastfeeding assessment tool on postpartum, providing numerous venues around the hospital to deliver a poster presentation about breastfeeding during World Breast Feeding Week, increasing the level of breastfeeding education among staff nurses, and developing a breast feeding elective for pediatric residents.

The group will continue to work together to continue to promote a baby friendly environment and a consistent breastfeeding message to all of our new mothers from the first prenatal visit through postnatal OB visits and pediatric follow-up. Our goal is to someday become a World Health Organization (WHO) Baby Friendly designated hospital. This can only be realized if we continue to collaborate to meet this goal. Through this collaborative experience the group will continue to provide patient education, promote breastfeeding, engage in research activities, and allow for professional educational opportunities. This group exemplifies a practice program that has demonstrated positive outcomes for breastfeeding mothers and a pro-breastfeeding healthcare team that has emerged from a cooperative multidisciplinary work model.