



May 13, 2016

Jimmy Kolker
Assistant Secretary for Global Affairs
Office of Global Affairs
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Kolker,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to urge the U.S. Government to support a strong resolution at the 2016 World Health Assembly to endorse the proposed *Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotion of Foods for Infants and Young Children* (the “Guidance”), note the importance of the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* (the “Code”), call on countries to implement the Guidance, and call on the Director-General to report every two years on implementation of the Guidance.

The Guidance provides common sense and evidence-based recommendations to support policymakers and public health officials in the development of policies and programs that protect and promote optimal infant and young child nutrition and enable parents and caregivers to receive clear and accurate information on feeding.

The Guidance is also a critical step forward in protecting breastfeeding. The scientific literature is clear that breastfeeding is negatively impacted by the inappropriate promotion of products that serve as breast milk substitutes and by certain practices used to market other infant and young child foods. Action 6 of *The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* (2011), calls to “Ensure that the marketing of infant formula is conducted in a way that minimizes its negative impacts on exclusive breastfeeding,” and specifically to “Hold marketers of infant formula accountable for complying with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.” Although the Guidance does not specifically amend or replace any provisions in the Code, it does provide critical clarification around its scope.

In putting forward the Guidance, WHO also aims to support countries in the development of policies to curb childhood obesity and diet-related chronic diseases. There is growing concern among the

scientific community that many commercially-produced foods and beverages targeted toward infants and young children are high in added sugars, saturated fat, salt and trans-fatty acids and are contributing to the rapid rise in childhood obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes.

The U.S. Government's strong support for the Guidance at the upcoming World Health Assembly will send an important signal to countries throughout the world that the health of infants and young children is of paramount importance and that foods produced for infants and young children must be appropriately marketed.

Signatory organizations:

American Association of Birth Centers
American Breastfeeding Institute
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Public Health Association
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.
Breastfeeding USA
California WIC Association
First Focus
Fullinwider Consulting
HealthConnect One
Healthy Children Project, Inc.
Human Milk Banking Association of North America
International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners
International Childbirth Education Association
La Leche League International
Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review
Committee
Lamaze International
Milk Of The Heart
National WIC Association
Public Citizen
Shape Up America!
United States Breastfeeding Committee
United States Lactation Consultant Association