

October 16, 2023

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Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Bill Cassidy
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Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
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Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Frank Pallone
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Honorable Bobby Scott
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Pasteurized Donor Human Milk Constellation Letter in Support of the Access to Donor Milk Act

We the undersigned, in solidarity with the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee (USBC)-affiliated Pasteurized Donor Human Milk Constellation, are in full support of the Access to Donor Milk Act (ADMA) of 2023 (S. 2819/H.R. 5486) and request your support in passing this legislation. The ADMA is a critical component of the [USBC vision for a robust infrastructure for infant nutrition security](#) in the United States, which includes four pillars: parents, programs, policies, and a plan for emergencies. The vision for the four pillars was codified by the USBC in response to the 2022 infant formula recall and subsequent shortage, but the country's need for an infrastructure to protect and nourish all of our country's youngest people is ongoing.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends exclusive breastfeeding/human milk feeding for the first six months after birth and continued breastfeeding with addition of complementary foods to two years of age.¹ Donor human milk plays a vital role to support exclusive human milk diets when mother's own milk is unavailable or insufficient. Pasteurized donor human milk is human milk that has been donated to a milk bank. It is specifically processed so that it can be given to any baby, although it is generally prioritized for distribution to the most medically vulnerable infants, including those with very low birth weight or with serious gastrointestinal issues. Pasteurized donor human milk can also serve as a bridge to breastfeeding when there is a delay in mother's milk increasing or a medical need for supplementation. When mother's own milk is unavailable or insufficient, donor milk offers similar benefits, such as optimal nutrition, easy digestibility, and immune protection. The World Health

¹ Policy Statement: Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. American Academy of Pediatrics; 2022.

Organization and the AAP recommend the use of donor milk for low-birthweight infants, as well as for sick infants who cannot be fed their mother's own milk.^{2,3}

Access to donor milk has been shown to reduce infant mortality rates, lower healthcare costs, and shorten hospital stays. Specifically, the use of donor milk is associated with increased survival rates and lowered rates of infections, sepsis, serious lung disease, and gastrointestinal complications.^{4,5} In 2021, there were 383,979 preterm births in the United States, representing 10.5% of live births,⁶ so the potential for health and cost savings is substantial. Data from one study shows that the cost of a neonatal intensive care unit stay for infants at very low birth weight is nearly \$220,000 for 56 days.⁷ The use of donor human milk can reduce hospital length of stay by 18-50 days by preventing the development of necrotizing enterocolitis in preterm infants.⁸ And the benefits of human milk extend beyond the inpatient stay, with infants receiving all human milk diets in the NICU experiencing fewer hospital readmissions and better overall long-term outcomes.^{9,10}

Although donor milk has important health implications for vulnerable infants in all communities and can result in significant economic benefit, donor milk is not accessible equitably across communities.¹¹ **The ADMA would help increase life-saving access to donor milk for more families by:**

- 1) Allowing state agencies to use Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) funding to promote the need for and benefits of donor milk and allowing WIC funds to support donor milk activities in states, tribes, and territories;
- 2) Providing emergency capacity-building funding (\$3 million) for milk banks in the event that there is a rapid increase in demand for donor milk, as occurred during the 2022 formula shortage;

² Maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health: guidelines on optimal feeding of low birth-weight infants in low- and middle-income countries. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2011.

³ Standards for improving the quality of care for small and sick newborns in health facilities. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020.

⁴ Villamor-Martinez, E., Pierro, M., et al. (2018). Donor human milk protects against bronchopulmonary dysplasia: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Nutrients*, 10(2), 238.

⁵ Hair, A.B., Peluso, A.M., et al. (2018). Beyond necrotizing enterocolitis prevention: improving outcomes with an exclusive human milk based diet. *Breastfeeding Medicine*, 11(2), 70-74.

⁶ March of Dimes. (n.d.). A profile of prematurity of United States.

<https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/united-states/prematurity-profile>

⁷ Phibbs CS, Schmitt SK, Cooper M, Gould JB, Lee HC, Profit J, Lorch SA. Birth Hospitalization Costs and Days of Care for Mothers and Neonates in California, 2009-2011. *Journal of Pediatrics*. 2019 Jan; 204:118-125. e14.

⁸ Buckle, A., & Taylor, C. (2017). Cost and Cost-Effectiveness of Donor Human Milk to Prevent Necrotizing Enterocolitis: Systematic Review. *Breastfeeding medicine : the official journal of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine*, 12(9), 528-536. <https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2017.0057>.

⁹ Vohr, B.R., Poindexter, B. (2006). Beneficial Effects of Breast Milk in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit on the Developmental Outcome of Extremely Low Birth Weight Infants at 18 Months of Age. *Pediatrics*, 118(1), 115-123.

¹⁰ Racial Disparities in Human Donor Milk Feedings: A Study Using Electronic Medical Records. *Health Equity*. Nov 2022.798-808.

¹¹ Boundy EO, Perrine CG, Nelson JM, Hamner HC. Disparities in Hospital-Reported Breast Milk Use in Neonatal Intensive Care Units - United States, 2015. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2017 Dec 8;66(48):1313-1317.

- 3) Creating a donor milk awareness program at the Department of Health and Human Services (\$1 million) to educate the public on donor milk, nonprofit milk banks, and to publicize the need for donor milk; and
- 4) Requiring that the Secretary of Health and Human Services draft guidance that addresses appropriate standards for collection, processing, handling, transfer, and storage of donor milk and requiring the Secretary to convene a public meeting to inform this guidance.

Throughout the infant formula recalls and resulting shortages in 2022, milk banks across the country saw a significant increase in inquiries to donate and receive milk. The formula shortages and recalls disproportionately impacted families who were unable to pivot to different formula brands. Milk banks increased their processing rates in response to the increased demand, but more milk banks, depots (drop-off sites), and especially more donors are needed. **The need to invest in an infrastructure that ensures American babies are safely fed has never been clearer.**

The small but impactful investments in the Access to Donor Milk Act provide an extraordinary opportunity for the 118th Congress to save lives while reducing healthcare costs. We, the signatories, reiterate our full support for federal legislation that expands access to and ensures the continued safety of donor human milk. We call on Congress to quickly pass the Access to Donor Milk Act of 2023 to ensure that medically vulnerable infants across the country have access to life-saving donor milk.

Thank you for your support of babies and families. If you have any questions or would like more information on the ADMA, please contact Lindsay Groff, the Executive Director of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America at lindsay@hmbana.org.

CO-SIGNERS

as of 4/22/2024

Total number of signers as of 4/22/2024: 231

International, National, and Tribal Organizations:

1,000 Days
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Birth Centers
American Breastfeeding Institute
American College of Nurse Midwives
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
A Better Balance
Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.
Breastfeeding Family-Friendly Communities
Breastfeeding USA
Caring Across Generations
Center for Health Equity, Education and Research
Childbirth and Postpartum Professionals Association
Global Military Lactation Community

HealthConnect One
Healthy Children Project, Inc.
Healthy Horizons
Healthy Nourishments
Human Milk Banking Association of North America
Human Milk Foundation
International Breastfeeding Institute
International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners
Kewa Pueblo Health Corporation
Lactation Education Resources
Lamaze International
La Leche League Alliance
La Leche League of the United States of America, Inc.
Mamava
March for Moms
March of Dimes

Médecins Humanistes
Medela LLC
Melinated Moms
Military Birth Resource Network and
Postpartum Coalition
Mom Congress
MomsRising
Mothering Justice
MotherJourney
Mothers' Milk Bank
National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Pediatric Nurse
Practitioners
National Council of Jewish Women
National Institute for Children's Health Quality
National League for Nursing
National Medical Association
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Organization for Women
National Perinatal Association
National WIC Association
Nurse Family Partnership
Nurture
Pumpin Pal
Reclaim Black Motherhood LLC
Rocky Mountain Children's Health Foundation
Symonette Strategies & Solutions
The Center for Emergency Management
Intelligence Research
The Institute for the Advancement of
Breastfeeding and Lactation Education
The Salvador E. Alvarez Institute for Non-
Violence
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee
U.S. Lactation Consultant Association

Regional, State, and Local Organizations:

Alabama

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee
Baobab Birth Collective

Alaska

Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition

Arizona

Cochise County WIC

California

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific
Islander Lactation Collaborative of California
BreastfeedLA
California Breastfeeding Coalition
California WIC Association
NEC Society
Nursing Mothers Counsel Inc.
Salud Para La Gente
San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition
Sonoma County Department of Health Services
University of California Milk Bank

Colorado

Banner Fort Collins Medical Center
Boulder County Nurse-Family Partnership
Birth Into Community
Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition
Colorado Children's Campaign
Cuenta Conmigo Lactancia
Denver WIC
Montrose County Region 10 NFP
Motherhood Untamed Lactation
Mothers' Milk Bank of Colorado
Northern Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition
The Nest Lactation and Postpartum Support
Uchealth

Connecticut

Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition
Southern Connecticut State University,
Department of Public Health

Delaware

Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware

District of Columbia

District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition

Florida

Breastfeeding Coalition of Palm Beach County
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition
Florida West Coast Breastfeeding Task Force
Kristen Cairns Lactation
Tampa Bay Breastfeeding Task Force
Mothers' Milk Bank of Florida

Georgia

Georgia Breastfeeding Coalition
Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of
Pediatrics
Med Milk, Inc

Hawaii
Breastfeeding Hawaii

Illinois
Illinois Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes
Precious Jewels Moms Ministries
The Busy Birthworker

Indiana
Flourish, Inc
Indiana Breastfeeding Coalition
Indiana University Health
The Milk Bank

Iowa
Iowa Breastfeeding Coalition

Kansas
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Breastfeeding
Coalition

Kentucky
Kentuckiana Lactation Improvement Coalition
Lactation Improvement Network of Kentucky,
Inc.

Louisiana
Birthmark Doula Collective
Mothers' Milk Bank of Louisiana

Maine
Maine State Breastfeeding Coalition

Maryland
4th Trimester Family
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition
Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of
Pediatrics
Werbie, LLC

Massachusetts

Beth Israel Lahey Health Winchester Hospital
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Cambridge/Somerville WIC Program
Cape Cod Hospital
Massachusetts Baby-Friendly Collaborative
Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition
Mass. PPD Fund
Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast
New England Mothers First
Perinatal Neonatal Quality Improvement
Network of Massachusetts

Michigan
2 for Baby LLC
Gratiot County Breastfeeding Coalition
InterCare Community Health Network WIC
Michigan Breastfeeding Network

Minnesota
Breastfeeding Boosters of Cottonwood,
Jackson, and Nobles Counties
Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition
Minnesota Milk Bank for Babies

Mississippi
Mississippi Breastfeeding Coalition
Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy
of Pediatrics
Mothers' Milk Bank of Mississippi

Missouri
It Takes a Village - SEMO
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition
St. Louis Breastfeeding Coalition

Montana
Mothers' Milk Bank of Montana

Nebraska
Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition

Nevada
Shining Star Community Services
Touch of Gold

New Hampshire
New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force

New Jersey

Capital Health Hospital
City of East Orange WIC Clinic
La Leche League of the Garden State
New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition
Perinatal Health Equity Initiative

New Mexico

New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force

New York

Ancient Song
Breastfeed NY
Experience Birth & Beyond
New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition
NYU Langone Health
Public Health Solutions
Supporting Our Mothers Initiative
The New York Milk Bank
University of Rochester, Division of
Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine

North Carolina

Breastfeed Orange North Carolina
Momma's Village-Fayetteville, Inc
North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition
The Milky Mermaid, LLC

Ohio

Appalachian Breastfeeding Network
Bright Future Lactation Resource Centre Ltd.
Ohio Breastfeeding Alliance
University Hospitals

Oklahoma

Athena Lactation, LLC
Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates
Oklahoma Mothers' Milk Bank

Oregon

Black Parent Initiative
Dandelion Myofunctional and Lactation Therapy

Pennsylvania

Allegheny County Breastfeeding Coalition
Breast Assured Lactation LLC
Chester County Health Department
Coalition for Lactation-Friendly Schools

CONVERGE: Center for Innovative Research on
Gender Health Equity at the University of
Pittsburgh

Drexel University
Main Line Health
Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Coalition
Pennsylvania Mid-state Lactation Coalition
Pennsylvania Resource Organization for
Lactation Consultants
Philadelphia Department of Public Health
Sunrise Lactation LLC
University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing
Maternal/Perinatal and Reproductive Health
Research

Puerto Rico

Alimentación Segura Infantil
Centro Integral de Lactancia
Centro Pediátrico de Lactancia y Crianza
Puerto Rico Chapter American Academy
Pediátrica, Inc

South Carolina

Beaufort Jasper Hampton Comprehensive
Health Services, Inc.

Tennessee

Mothers' Milk Bank Tennessee
Shelby County Breastfeeding Coalition
Sumner Regional Medical Center
Tennessee Lactation Care LLC

Texas

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic
Milk Connections
Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin Inc.
Mothers' Milk Bank of North Texas
Public Health Solutions
Tarrant County Breastfeeding Coalition
Texas Children's Hospital

Vermont

University of Vermont Medical Center
Vermont Breastfeeding Network
Vermont Donor Milk Center, Inc.
Vermont Lactation Consultant Association

Virginia

757Breastfeeds

Blue Ridge Breastfeeding Coalition

Childrens Hospital of Richmond at VCU

Love is Patient Lactation Services, LLC

Nurture

Old Dominion University School of Nursing

Postpartum Support Virginia

The King's Daughters Milk Bank

Virginia Breastfeeding Advisory Committee

Virginia Department of Health

Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition

Virginia Commonwealth University Health

Washington

Breastfeeding Coalition of Washington

Kitsap County Breastfeeding Coalition

South Sound Lactation Network

West Virginia

Rhia Ventures

West Virginia American College of Nurse-

Midwives Affiliate

West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance

Wisconsin

Breastfeeding Alliance of Northeast Wisconsin

Wisconsin Association of Lactation Consultants