

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to **direct \$20M to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding line item** in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. This \$20M investment, \$10.25M above the FY 2024 level, represents a critical course correction in national investment in the health, safety, and well-being of infants and young children.

The pregnancy, birth, and postpartum periods through the child's first 1,000 days are critical periods for securing and establishing lifelong health for both mothers and babies. Yet, recent events have revealed deep vulnerabilities in our nation's infrastructure to protect infant nutrition security. Pandemic-induced breakdowns in maternity care practices that underpin the establishment of breastfeeding, the commercial milk formula recall and resulting shortage, and a spate of weather-related natural disasters have demonstrated infrastructure gaps and a lack of resilience to safety and supply chain challenges, putting babies in danger and forcing parents to make difficult infant care and feeding decisions. The unique nutritional needs of infants and young children require a dedicated investment in their protection through an increase in the CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding line item.

Through this investment, the nation can make necessary programmatic advancements to ensure access to lactation support, supplies, and accommodations and expand access to pasteurized donor human milk. These essential actions would work in tandem with increased efforts by the Food and Drug Administration to ensure the safety of commercial milk formulas, providing a more comprehensive approach to protecting infant nutrition security.

**We urge the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to direct \$20M to the CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding line item in FY2025.** Fully funding the line item will make it possible for DNPAO to:

- (1) Maintain and expand critical monitoring and surveillance activities, including annual analysis of the National Immunization Survey (NIS), administration of the bi-annual Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) Survey, bi-annual production of the National Breastfeeding Report Card, and administration of the longitudinal Infant Feeding Practices Study, which is especially needed in light of recent updates to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which, for the first time, provides nutritional guidance for infants and toddlers;
- (2) Utilize CDC's website to disseminate breastfeeding data and statistics, guidelines and recommendations, key resources, and information on emergent breastfeeding issues, which is invaluable to the public health community, including breastfeeding coalitions and direct service providers;
- (3) Expand quality improvement investments to implement maternity care best practices in hospitals while implementing initiatives to recover from pandemic-induced breakdowns in those settings;
- (4) Expand funding for state, community, and tribal efforts to advance care coordination and strengthen the lactation support landscape through policy, systems, and environmental change interventions to reduce or eliminate breastfeeding disparities; and
- (5) Enhance and deepen partnerships with other federal agencies to develop national and state-level infrastructure to integrate infant feeding and lactation support services into emergency response systems and food security programs during acute disasters and prolonged public health crises.

Within CDC, the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) works to prevent chronic disease, improve maternal and infant health outcomes, and respond to emerging health issues and

emergencies. DNPAO's efforts to support states, territories, tribal nations, cities and counties, hospitals, and communities in advancing breastfeeding continuity of care and increasing access to breastfeeding-friendly environments within hospitals, workplaces, and community spaces are high-value, low-cost public health interventions. These investments have contributed to increased initiation and duration of breastfeeding, including securing an important achievement with over one million babies per year (28 percent) being born in hospitals with supportive breastfeeding practices.<sup>i</sup> DNPAO has demonstrated, through funding systems-level interventions in states, and the provision of technical assistance and resources, to have the expertise and the ability to help states and communities implement upstream interventions that support breastfeeding families. **An increase in funding for the Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program will benefit families, public health, and the economy:**

- All major medical authorities recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding until at least one year of age.<sup>ii, iii, iv, v</sup> Breastfeeding plays an essential role in establishing good nutrition and healthy weight, reducing the risk of chronic disease, and improving maternal and infant health outcomes. The evidence for the value of human milk on overall health for infants, children, and mothers is scientific, robust, and continually reaffirmed by new research. Breastfed infants are at lower risk of certain infections and sudden unexplained infant death. A recent CDC study of over 3 million U.S. births found that ever breastfeeding is associated with a 26% reduction in the odds of post-perinatal (between 7-364 days) infant death.<sup>vi</sup> Breastfed children have decreased risk of obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, asthma, and childhood leukemia. Women who breastfeed reduce their risk of specific chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers.<sup>vii</sup> Increasing breastfeeding rates is an important component of efforts to address the maternal mortality<sup>viii</sup> and infant mortality crisis.<sup>ix</sup> The United States has the highest maternal mortality rate of any wealthy nation in the world,<sup>x</sup> with significant and worsening disparities for women and families of color, particularly in Black and Indigenous communities.
- While the vast majority of babies start out breastfeeding, barriers in healthcare, community, and employment settings continue to impede breastfeeding success.<sup>xi</sup> There are also persistent breastfeeding rate disparities by racial, geographic, and socioeconomic factors.<sup>xii</sup> Policy, systems, and environmental barriers to lactation success unduly impact Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, residents of economically distressed urban areas, and people living in rural districts. These same populations experience many other health inequities, including less access to nutritious foods<sup>xiii</sup> and a disproportionate burden of overweight, obesity, and chronic disease,<sup>xiv</sup> all of which can be reduced by increasing breastfeeding rates.
- Low breastfeeding rates in the United States cost our nation millions of dollars through higher health systems costs, lost productivity, and higher household expenditures.<sup>xv</sup> Chronic disease management results in trillions of dollars in annual healthcare costs.<sup>xvi</sup> At the national level, improving breastfeeding practices through programs and policies has been shown to be one of the best investments a country can make, as every dollar invested is estimated to result in a US \$35 economic return.<sup>xvii</sup> Employers see significant cost savings when their workers are able to successfully breastfeed.<sup>xviii</sup> Increased breastfeeding rates are also associated with reduced environmental impact and associated expenses.<sup>xix</sup>

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) is currently conducting a consensus study to provide an evidence-based analysis of the macroeconomic, social, and health costs and benefits of the United States' current breastfeeding rates and goals.<sup>xx</sup> An increase in funding for the CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program will help take the study results from research to action.

Please support this necessary investment in babies and young children, our nation's most valuable and vulnerable resource.

## CO-SIGNERS

*Total number of signers as of 08/27/2024: 172*

### **International, National, & Tribal Organizations:**

1,000 Days of FHI 360  
A Better Balance  
Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine  
Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Birth Centers  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians  
American Public Health Association  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
Baby-Friendly USA, Inc  
Breastfeeding Family-Friendly Communities  
Breastfeedingusa.org  
Center of Biological Diversity  
Center for WorkLife Law  
Ceres Chill, Co.  
Every Mother, Inc.  
Global Military Lactation Community  
Heluna Health  
Healthy Children Project, Inc.  
Healthy Horizons  
Human Milk Banking Association of North America  
International Board of Lactation Consultant  
Examiners  
International Childbirth Education Association  
La Leche League Alliance for Breastfeeding  
Education  
La Leche League USA  
Lactation Education Resources  
March for Moms  
Melinated Moms  
Mommy Me Please Maternal and Neonatal Care

Mothers' Milk Bank of Rocky Mountain Children's  
Health Foundation  
MomsRising  
National Association of Councils on Developmental  
Disabilities  
National Association of Neonatal Nurses  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Council of Jewish Women Pittsburgh  
Section  
National Institute for Children's Health Quality  
National League for Nursing  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Perinatal Association  
National WIC Association  
Sage Transformations  
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice  
Collective  
Symonette Strategies & Solutions  
The Lactation Network  
The Salvador E. Alvarez Institute for Non-Violence  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee

### **Regional, State, & Local Organizations:**

#### Alabama

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee

#### Alaska

Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition

#### Arkansas

Arkansas Birthing Project

#### Arizona

Abrazo

La Leche League of Tucson, Arizona

### California

Alameda County Breastfeeding Coalition  
BreastfeedLA  
California Breastfeeding Coalition  
Inland Empire Breastfeeding Coalition  
LA Best Babies Network  
La Leche League USA  
Maternal and Child Health Access  
Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.  
Pretty Mama Breastfeeding LLC  
Sacramento Breastfeeding Coalition  
Salud para la gente  
San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition

### Colorado

Banner Health  
Colorado Children's Campaign  
Cuenta Conmigo Lactancia  
Guereca's Consultants  
Pueblo Department of Public Health and  
Environment WIC office

### Connecticut

Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition

### Delaware

Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware  
Nemours Children's Health System

### District of Colombia

American College of Obstetricians and  
Gynecologists  
District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition  
United Planning Organization

### Florida

321 Lactation, LLC  
Breastfeed Miami Inc  
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition  
Healthy Start Coalition of Brevard County  
Mother Nurture Consulting  
Tampa Bay Breastfeeding Task Force  
The 321 Nest

### Georgia

Georgia Southern University  
Wonderlove Lactation Services, LLC

### Hawaii

Breastfeeding Hawaii  
Waimanalo Health Center - WIC Program

### Illinois

City of Moline WIC Program

### Indiana

Indiana Breastfeeding Coalition  
Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lake

### Iowa

Iowa Breastfeeding Network

### Kansas

Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

### Kentucky

Lactation Improvement Network of Kentucky, Inc.

### Louisiana

### Maine

Maine State Breastfeeding Coalition

### Maryland

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine  
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition

### Massachusetts

Healthy Children Project, Inc.  
Mass. PPD Fund  
Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast

### Michigan

Lactation Lighthouse  
Michigan Breastfeeding Network  
Michigan Health and Human Services WIC Program  
Mommies in the D

Saginaw County Health Department  
Southeast Michigan IBCLCs of Color

Minnesota

Minnesota Milk Bank for Babies

Missouri

Healthy Nourishments, LLC  
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition  
St Louis Breastfeeding Coalition

Montana

Nebraska

MilkWorks

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force

New Mexico

New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force

New Jersey

Center for Breastfeeding Information Research  
Library  
Fullbirth Inc.  
La Leche League of the Garden State  
La Leche League of Hillsborough Bridgewater  
New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition  
Sweet P Lactation

New York

Black Woman Do VBCA  
Breastfeed NY  
Breastfeeding and Human Lactation Study Center,  
University of Rochester  
Cayuga Medical Center Birthplace  
La Leche League of New York  
New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition  
New York State Department of Health  
NYU Langone Health  
Supporting Our Mothers Initiative

North Carolina

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
Breastfeed Durham  
Breastfeed Orange North Carolina  
North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition  
Piedmont Health Services, Inc  
University of North Carolina Health System

Ohio

All Mothers Encouraged To Nurse  
Bright Future Lactation Resource Centre, Ltd.  
Ohio Breastfeeding Alliance  
Southwest Ohio Breastfeeding Coalition  
The BLACK Collaborative

Oklahoma

Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates  
Oklahoma Breastfeeding Resource Center  
Oklahoma Mothers' Milk Bank

Oregon

Northwest Permanente  
Oregon Washington Lactation Association

Pennsylvania

La Leche League of Western Pennsylvania  
Maternal and Family Health Services  
Mommy Me Please Maternal and Neonatal Care  
Momtonomy Inc  
South Central Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Coalition  
Luzerne County Breastfeeding

Puerto Rico

Alimentación Segura Infantil  
Coalición para la Lactancia Materna en Puerto Rico

Rhode Island

Urban Perinatal Education Center

South Carolina

South Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition

Tennessee

All Better Pediatrics  
Breastfeeding Sisters That Are Receiving Support

Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee

Texas

Texas Health Huguley Hospital

Utah

Vermont

Mamava

Vermont Donor Milk Center, Inc.

Virginia

757Breastfeeds

Birth in color

Erica the Doula

Nurture

Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition

Washington

Inspired Beginnings: Birth. Redefined

Nutrition First

Urban Indian Health Institute, Seattle Indian

Washington State Lactation Collaborative

West Virginia

West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance

Wisconsin

The Breastfeeding Alliance of Northeast Wisconsin

Wisconsin Association of Lactation Consultants