

May 19, 2025

Dear Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

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) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. This \$20M investment, \$10.5M above the FY 2024 level, represents a critical course correction in our nation's investment in the health, safety, and well-being of infants and young children.

Building Health from the Start: A High-Value Investment

The beginning of pregnancy through the child's first 1,000 days are critical periods for securing and establishing lifelong health for both mothers and babies. Creating a strong foundation for health during this period not only reduces long-term healthcare costs but also boosts economic productivity by supporting the development of a healthier, more resilient population.

Low breastfeeding rates in the United States [cost our nation](#) millions of dollars through higher health system costs, lost productivity, and higher household expenditures; improving breastfeeding practices through programs and policies is one of the best investments a country can make, as every dollar invested is estimated to result in a [\\$35 economic return](#). Furthermore, low breastfeeding rates are associated with global [economic losses](#) of about \$302 billion annually, which is equal to approximately 0.49% of world gross national income.

Advancing Chronic Disease Prevention and Infant Nutrition Security

Breastfeeding plays an essential role in establishing good nutrition, maintaining healthy body weight, reducing the risk of chronic disease and [infant mortality](#), and improving maternal and infant health outcomes. Breastfed children have a [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. On a relational level, the hormones produced while breastfeeding, like oxytocin, strengthen the [maternal-infant bond](#) and improve emotional well-being.

The American Academy of Pediatrics [recommends](#) that infants be exclusively breastfed for approximately six months with continued breastfeeding during the introduction of complementary foods for two years or as long as mutually desired by the mother and child. However, breastfeeding rates drop sharply after birth, with [recent data](#) showing that even though 84.1% of infants start out breastfeeding, the rate falls dramatically in the weeks after birth, with only 57.5% of infants breastfeeding exclusively at one month of age. Making matters worse are [the infant formula recall and resulting shortage](#), [natural](#)

[disasters which destabilized infant nutrition](#), and the [continued closure of maternity hospitals](#). These events demonstrate infrastructure gaps and a lack of resilience in formula safety and supply systems, putting millions of babies in danger.

While the health benefits of breastfeeding are well established, many families face significant challenges in healthcare, community, and workplace settings that hinder successful breastfeeding. Barriers are particularly pronounced in rural and underserved areas, where [access to supportive services and resources can be limited](#). Strengthening breastfeeding support in these communities is critical to improving maternal and infant health outcomes, while also addressing broader public health concerns such as early childhood nutrition and chronic disease prevention.

Maximizing Public Health and Economic Returns

In the United States, chronic disease management contributes [trillions of dollars](#) to annual healthcare costs, which increased breastfeeding rates can help reduce. In the workplace, employers see [significant cost savings](#) when their workers are able to maintain breastfeeding after returning to work. Increased breastfeeding rates are also associated with [reduced environmental impact and associated expenses](#). Savings can be seen at home as well, as following optimal breastfeeding practices [reduces household expenditures](#). [Investments in infant nutrition last a lifetime](#), paying long-term dividends to economic and human development. Economists have also completed analyses finding that investing in nutrition is among the most cost-effective development actions, laying the groundwork for successful investments in other sectors.

The unique nutritional needs of infants and young children should be a top funding priority. Within the 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 crises. [DNPAO efforts](#) are high-value, low-cost public health interventions that support states, territories, tribal nations, local governments, hospitals, and communities in advancing breastfeeding continuity of care, as well as increasing access to breastfeeding-friendly environments within hospitals, workplaces, and community spaces.

Strengthening Outcomes Through Increased Investment

Since 2012, Congress has allocated funds to the CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program. In FY 2024, level funding of \$9.75 million was maintained for this line item. This investment has [yielded a strong return](#), with the percentage of babies who start out breastfeeding increasing from 73 percent in 2004 to 84 percent in 2021, and the share of births in [hospitals with supportive breastfeeding practices](#) rising more than sevenfold—from 3.8 percent in 2010 to nearly 29 percent in 2021—now encompassing over one million babies each year.

Increased funding is needed, however, to facilitate ongoing, critical efforts to build a strong public health infrastructure of breastfeeding support. Increased funding for the Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program line item will allow DNPAO to:

- Maintain and expand critical monitoring and surveillance activities, including annual analysis of the National Immunization Survey (NIS), the bi-annual Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) Survey, and the National Breastfeeding Report Card.
- Disseminate breastfeeding data, guidelines, and key resources via CDC's website to support public health efforts.
- Expand quality improvement initiatives to restore and strengthen maternity care best practices in hospitals.
- Enhance care coordination and strengthen the lactation support landscape through policy, systems, and environmental change interventions to improve breastfeeding rates.
- Develop national and state-level infrastructure to integrate infant feeding and lactation support into emergency response systems and food security programs.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) is currently [conducting a consensus study](#) to provide an evidence-based cost-benefit analysis of the macroeconomic, social, and health impact of the United States' current breastfeeding rates and goals. Increased funding for the CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program will ensure that the study's findings translate into meaningful action.

Increased funding for the Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding Program will bolster these successes, benefiting families, public health, and the economy. The American people, especially our babies, are the nation's most valuable resource. Please support this crucial investment in infant nutrition security.

CO-SIGNERS

Total Number of Signers as of May 19, 2025: 142

International, National, & Tribal

Organizations:

A Better Balance
Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Birth Centers
American College of Osteopathic
Pediatricians
Association of State Public Health
Nutritionists
Baby-Friendly USA
Barton Dunant
Breastfeeding Family Friendly
Communities
Breastfeeding USA
Center for Biological Diversity
Global Military Lactation Community
HealthConnect One
Healthy Horizons
Human Milk Banking Association of North
America
International Board of Lactation
Consultant Examiners
The Salvador E. Alvarez Institute for Non-
Violence
La Leche League of United States West
Area Network

La Leche League USA
Lactation Education Resources
Mamava
Medela LLC
MomsRising
National Association of Pediatric Nurse
Practitioners
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National League for Nursing
Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC) Society
NikkiLeeHealth
Symonette Strategies & Solutions, LLC
Talk and Thrive Education
The U.S. Breastfeeding Committee
The Well Project
United States Lactation Consultant
Association

Regional, State, & Local Organizations:

Alabama

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee
Baobab Birth Collective

Alaska

Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition

Arizona

Mountain Park Health Center

California

Alameda County Public Health

Department

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and

Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Lactation

Collaborative of California

California Breastfeeding Coalition

Central Valley Lactation Association

La Leche League Alliance for

Breastfeeding Education

La Leche League of California, Hawaii, and

Nevada

La Leche League of Oakland, California

Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.

Sage Transformations

Tiburcio Vasquez WIC Program

Colorado

Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition

HCA Rose Medical Center

Connecticut

Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition

Delaware

Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware

District of Columbia

DC Breastfeeding Coalition

IMA Nourish

Florida

Florida Breastfeeding Coalition

Florida Chapter of American Academy of

Pediatrics

MaryCatherine Jones Consulting, LLC

LoveLoy Marriages, Mediation & More,
Inc.

Tampa Bay Breastfeeding Task Force

Georgia

Georgia Breastfeeding Coalition

Georgia Southern University

Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere

Hawaii

Breastfeeding Hawaii

Hui Malama Ola Na Oihi

Illinois

Soak Lactation

Indiana

Fort Wayne Pediatrics

Kansas

Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Northwest Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

Kentucky

Lactation Improvement Network of
Kentucky, Inc.

Maine

Maine State Breastfeeding Coalition

Maryland

BreastfeedingWorks
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition

Massachusetts

Baystate Medical Center
Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition

Michigan

Ingham County WIC
Michigan Breastfeeding Network
Next Generation Family Services
Saginaw Community Breastfeeding
Coalition
Saginaw County Health Department
Southeast Michigan IBCLC's of Color

Minnesota

Birth Justice Collaborative

Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition
Minnesota Milk Bank for Babies
WCMCA, Inc.

West Central Minnesota Communities
Action

Mississippi

Every Mother, Inc.
Gulf Coast Breastfeeding Center LLC

Missouri

Healthy Nourishments, LLC
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition
St. Louis Breastfeeding Coalition

Montana

Children's Clinic Pediatric Clinic

Nebraska

MilkWorks
Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition

New Hampshire

Embracing Lactation LLC
New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force

New Jersey

Branchburg Lactation
La Leche League of the Garden State

La Leche League of

Hillsborough/Bridgewater NJ

New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition

The City of East Orange WIC

New Mexico

New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force

New York

Birth By Queens

Breastfeeding Coordinator

Cortland Community Action Program

Finger Lakes Lactation, LLC

Nourishing Pathways Lactation

New York Lactation Consultant

Association

Supporting Our Mothers Initiative

The New York Milk Bank

North Carolina

Breastfeed Durham

Breastfeed Orange NC

Life By The Drop Lactation LLC

Little Roo Lactation and Wellness, LLC

Mattea's Lactation Services

North Carolina Department of Health and

Human Services

Piedmont Health Services

Wholesome Lactation Care, PLLC

Ohio

Appalachian Breastfeeding Network

Project Milk Mission

Oklahoma

Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding

Advocates

Oregon

Northwest Mothers Milk Bank

Pennsylvania

La Leche League of Eastern Pennsylvania

Luzerne County Breastfeeding Coalition

Reclaim Black Motherhood

Puerto Rico

Alimentación Segura Infantil

South Carolina

The Baby Lady

Tennessee

Breastfeeding Sisters That Are Receiving

Support

Knox County WIC

Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee

Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition

Texas

Tarrant County Breastfeeding Coalition

The Breast Choice Lactation Services

Utah

Comunidad Materna Utah

MOSAIC Inter-Faith Ministries

Vermont

Vermont Breastfeeding Network

Virginia

Kitsap County Lactation Coalition

La Leche League of Springfield VA &
Neighbors

Washington

Kitsap County Lactation Coalition

Nutrition First

South Sound Lactation Network

Washington State Lactation Collaborative

West Central Community Center WIC

Wisconsin

The Breastfeeding Alliance of Northeast

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Association of Lactation

Consultants