



A WORLDWIDE NETWORK OF LACTATION PROFESSIONALS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Surgeon General's *Call to Action:* Increase Support for Breastfeeding Families

Washington, D.C. – Breastfeeding support for new families was spotlighted in an unprecedented document issued today by the Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. Regina Benjamin. The *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* challenges the entire nation to work toward removing obstacles that can make it difficult for women to achieve their breastfeeding goals, and serves as a model roadmap for governments across the world to robustly address similar challenges.

The International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA) and United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA) enthusiastically support and endorse the document, reminding the public that it takes an entire community – health care providers, employers, families, policymakers, and the general public – to create an environment where mothers have the support and confidence to initiate and sustain breastfeeding.

INTERNATIONAL LACTATION CONSULTANT ASSOCIATION

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The Surgeon General identified 20 evidence-based actions that are needed, including establishing worksite policies and programs that are supportive to employees who are breastfeeding, implementing maternity care practices in hospitals and birthing facilities, reducing marketing of infant formula products, and ensuring access to services provided by International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs).

According to Cathy Carothers, President of the International Lactation Consultant Association, “IBCLCs are a lifeline to new mothers who are unsure about how to breastfeed successfully, or who encounter challenges along the way. Most mothers today want to breastfeed. If things don’t go as planned, an

IBCLC can help them get back on track. We are thrilled that the Surgeon General recognizes the importance of IBCLCs in helping mothers reach their goals.”

Laurie Beck, President of the U.S. Lactation Consultant Association, a national affiliate of ILCA, agrees. “IBCLCs support the *mother’s* goals,” she said. “We work with the entire health care team and in our communities to be sure that mothers have an easier time with breastfeeding.”

IBCLCs are the only health care professionals who specialize in, and are credentialed in, lactation management. More than 22,000 IBCLCs are available worldwide in hospitals, community-based clinics, government agencies, and private practice to help mothers get off to a good start with breastfeeding in the hospital, address breastfeeding challenges that may arise, assist mothers who return to work or school, help mothers with preterm babies and infants at risk, and answer questions as their babies grow. Research has shown that breastfeeding rates are higher among women who had babies in hospitals or birthing facilities where IBCLCs are on staff.

“The IBCLC is often the one who has the time and the expertise to listen to a mother, understand her goals and her needs, and help her find a plan that will work for her,” says Carothers. “We hear many stories from mothers who say their lactation consultant made the difference.”

ILCA provides a “**Find a Lactation Consultant Directory**” to help mothers quickly and easily find an IBCLC in their community at www.ilca.org. ILCA and the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE), the organization that administers the international IBCLC credential, also announced today the launch of a brand new online resource, the “**IBCLC Care Directory**,” which lists more than 200 hospitals and birthing facilities receiving the “IBCLC Care Award.” This recognition was given to facilities that have IBCLCs on staff, provide ongoing breastfeeding training for all care providers who see new mothers and babies, and which offer breastfeeding support programs for new families. The IBCLC Care Directory is available at: www.ibclccare.org. In addition, ILCA publishes a “**Worksite Lactation Support Directory**” for employers seeking IBCLC expertise in setting up a lactation support program in the workplace at www.ilca.org.

ILCA is the professional association for IBCLCs and other health care professionals who serve new families, with more than 5,500 members in 75 countries of the world. USLCA is the U.S. affiliate of ILCA devoted to providing services and resources for lactation professionals in the U.S.

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Please feel free to share this important Press Release with your colleagues and local media outlets. For more information about the important role of IBCLCs in meeting the U. S. Surgeon General's *Call to Action*, visit the [ILCA website](#) or contact the ILCA office at: info@ilca.org or info@uslcaonline.org, or call toll free at 1-888-ILCA-IS-U (452-2478).

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding

On January 20, 2011, Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin will release The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding in the Jack Morton Auditorium at The George Washington University.

Visit the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) at www.surgeongeneral.gov to download the document and view the Webcast of the Thursday, January 20 launch event.

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