



2501 Aerial Center Parkway, Suite 103  
Morrisville, NC 27560  
Phone: 919.861.4543  
Fax: 919.459.2075  
[www.uslca.org](http://www.uslca.org)  
[info@uslca.org](mailto:info@uslca.org)

July 2012

The United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA) supports New York City Mayor Bloomberg's bold challenge to the entrenched marketing practices of the formula industry. The city's voluntary "Latch On NYC" campaign, due to begin on September 3, seeks to support mothers' decisions to breastfeed their infants. Hospitals that choose to participate will store infant formula in ways that increase accountability for distribution, just as they do other nutraceutical products.

Critics allege that the program will erode mothers' feeding decisions and will be unsupportive of women who do not breastfeed. This is not the case. Rather, the program will support the decision of the majority of women by protecting them from inappropriate and predatory marketing practices. Most women enter the hospital planning to breastfeed. It is well documented that easy access to formula and "gifts" from its manufacturers undermine their confidence during a vulnerable period. Under Mayor Bloomberg's program, those mothers choosing not to breastfeed will retain access to infant formula during their hospital stay. Hospital personnel will not coerce anyone into breastfeeding. Formula companies are for-profit industries. Providing "free" products support their mission to increase sales. It is not the role of hospitals to market formula products for industry.

The Centers for Disease Control, Surgeon General, American Academy of Pediatrics, and myriad other healthcare-related professional associations urge hospitals to adopt research-based policies that support breastfeeding. One of these recommendations is to avoid giving unnecessary formula products to breastfeeding mothers. Mayor Bloomberg is courageous in being one of the first leaders in the nation to urge support for these practices at a city-wide level.

The major health issues facing the United States today are no longer infectious diseases, but rather chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Health care costs significantly outpace inflation. Should costs continue to rise on their current trajectory, they will soon become unsustainable. Breastfeeding is primary prevention and clearly, investing in prevention is essential for that nation's economic wellbeing. Supporting the mothers' decision to breastfeed by providing assistance and avoiding unethical marketing practices is the right decision.

International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) are health care providers with the expertise and both clinical and counseling skills needed to provide mothers with breastfeeding support. IBCLCs work in hospitals, clinics, physician practices, and many other settings. For more information, contact USLCA at [www.uslca.org](http://www.uslca.org).