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### United States Lactation Consultant Association Celebrates National Women's Health Week

The United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA) celebrates National Women's Health Week, May 13-19, an observance coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promote women's health. While most people are well aware that breastfeeding affords children many health protections, less well known are breastfeeding's health-promoting benefits to women.

Breastfeeding promotes women's health in many ways, from reducing the risk of excessive postpartum bleeding and postpartum depression to decreasing the risk of rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers. Clearly, breastfeeding has important health implications for individual women and for the population as a whole.

To promote women's health, USLCA would like to encourage employers, communities, and families to create an environment that is accepting and supportive of breastfeeding. US Surgeon General Regina Benjamin states that, "Given the importance of breastfeeding for the health and well-being of mothers and children, it is critical that we take action across the country to support breastfeeding." She acknowledges that breastfeeding success can be greatly improved through active support from families, friends, communities, employers, policymakers, and health care providers. Additionally, Dr. Benjamin touted International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) as an "excellent source of assistance for breastfeeding mothers." IBCLCs are health care professionals who work with mothers to facilitate breastfeeding, as well as with policymakers and employers to help create supportive environments. Additionally, research shows that breastfeeding rates are higher among women who have had babies in hospitals with IBCLCs on staff than in those without. For more information, visit [www.uslca.org](http://www.uslca.org).