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## **Breastfeeding Promotion Important During Emergency Preparedness Month**

RALEIGH, N.C. --- September is Emergency Preparedness Month. The United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA) joins the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in urging Americans to take action steps that will save lives in the event of a fire, natural disaster or other unexpected event. To the CDC, this means developing a family disaster plan, gathering emergency supplies, learning how to shelter where you are, understanding quarantine and isolation, and learning how to maintain a healthy state of mind (<http://www.cdc.gov/features/beready/>).

To this important list, USLCA would add promoting and supporting breastfeeding. Surprised? Throughout the world, tragedies occur when disaster strikes and access to clean water and commercial products is limited. In our nation each and every year, hurricanes, blizzards, and other emergencies jeopardize water supply and access to commercial products available in stores. Breastfeeding mothers have a ready supply of protective nourishment and warmth for their children.

The time to prepare for a disaster is before it strikes. This applies to packing a "go bag" and developing a communication plan, and also applies to providing for the needs of infants. A hallmark of emergency situations is unpredictability. Promoting and supporting breastfeeding for *every* family will help ensure that the most vulnerable members of society are protected when the unexpected happens.

Breastfeeding promotion and support is necessary from every sector of society, from healthcare to employers, friends and family to businesses. The nation will benefit as we lay a foundation of optimal health by preventing many acute and chronic illnesses in infants and adults, and as we provide for our youngest members needs in emergency situations. International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) are health care professionals with the expertise to work with policy-makers and individual families to promote, protect and support breastfeeding. For more information about breastfeeding in emergencies, please visit

<http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/Communities/BreastfeedingandEmergencies/tabid/193/Default.aspx>.

To locate an IBCLC near you, please visit [www.uslca.org](http://www.uslca.org).

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