



ILCA

A WORLDWIDE NETWORK OF LACTATION PROFESSIONALS



January 21, 2010

Dr. Regina Benjamin, MD, MBA
U.S. Surgeon General

RE: Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding

Dear Dr. Benjamin,

The International Lactation Consultant Association, which represents a profession of more than 22,000 International Board Certified Lactation Consultants from 75 countries of the world, and the U.S. Lactation Consultant Association, the national affiliate of ILCA that serves the lactation community in the United States, would like to express our profound appreciation for today's launch of the U.S. Surgeon General's *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*.

As you stated so eloquently today, "EVERYONE can help make breastfeeding easier for new moms," and ILCA/USLCA stand ready to partner with you to break down barriers that make it hard for mothers to achieve their goals. In particular, we were very pleased with Action #11, "Ensure access to services provided by International Board Certified Lactation Consultants." We are thrilled to see suggested strategies calling for reimbursement of IBCLC services and expanding the number of racial and ethnic minority IBCLCs. These are strong priorities for ILCA/USLCA, as well, and the *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* provides the language and the support from our nation's highest medical authority to assist us in these efforts.

We were very proud to launch a brand new resource today, the **IBCLC Care Directory**, which lists hospitals that staff IBCLCs, provide regular annual training for all staff, and conduct supportive breastfeeding projects. We hope this directory will be another step to not only increase support for staffing IBCLCs in hospitals, but also to nudge hospitals toward "Baby-Friendly" status. The directory is available at www.ibclccare.org and is a collaboration between ILCA and the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners, the credentialing organization for IBCLCs. Perhaps this resource can be included in messaging about IBCLCs that go to hospitals and state departments of health. Of course, ILCA's popular "Find a Lactation Consultant Directory" at www.ilca.org is also available to enable mothers and the public to search for an IBCLC nearest to them.

INTERNATIONAL LACTATION CONSULTANT ASSOCIATION

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You should also know that our members across the world have already begun taking your *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* to urge their own Ministries of Health to adopt similar national calls to action.

The global impact of what you have accomplished will ultimately have far-reaching implications across the world.

In closing, we would like to again thank you for what we consider to be an amazing gift, not only to the lactation community who now have support to strengthen their advocacy efforts, but to the millions of mothers and babies whose health and very lives will be affected in positive ways forever.

Your partners in making breastfeeding easy for new moms,

Cathy Carothers
President, International Lactation Consultant Association

Laurie Beck
President, United States Lactation Consultant Association

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