

## **Surgeon General's Call to Action: A Roadmap to Improving Support for Breastfeeding Mothers**

**Washington, DC**—Three out of four women in the United States provide their infants with the healthiest start in life by breastfeeding, and today Surgeon General Regina Benjamin called on the entire nation to support the removal of barriers to this important public health behavior. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* is an unprecedented document from the nation's highest medical source, calling on health care providers, employers, insurers, policymakers, researchers, and the community at large to take 20 concrete action steps to support mothers in reaching their personal breastfeeding goals.

The Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition and the United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) applauds the Call to Action, which is based on the latest evidence about the health, psychosocial, economic, and environmental effects of breastfeeding. The document includes action steps and implementation strategies for six major sectors of society:

- ***Mothers and their Families:*** emphasizes the need to educate and inform families about the importance of breastfeeding, and provide the ongoing support mothers need to continue.
- ***Communities:*** calls upon the entire community to support breastfeeding mothers, including the provision of peer counseling support, promotion of breastfeeding through community-based organizations and traditional and new media venues, and the removal of commercial barriers to breastfeeding.
- ***Health Care:*** urges the health care system to adopt evidence-based practices as outlined in the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, provide health professional education and training, ensure access to skilled, professional lactation care services, and increase availability of banked donor milk.
- ***Employment:*** calls for paid maternity leave and worksite and child care accommodations that support women when they return to work.
- ***Research and Surveillance:*** emphasizes the need for additional research, especially regarding the most effective ways to address disparities and measure the economic impact of breastfeeding, and calls for a national monitoring system.
- ***Public Health Infrastructure:*** calls for enhanced national leadership, including creation of a federal interagency work group, and increasing the capacity of the United States Breastfeeding Committee and affiliated state coalitions.

According to USBC Chair Robin Stanton, “*The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* truly paints the landscape of breastfeeding support in the United States, demonstrating a society-wide approach to removing the barriers that make it difficult for many women to succeed. The United States Breastfeeding Committee urges all Americans to be proactive in using these action steps as a springboard to extend support so that mothers throughout the country get the care, help and encouragement they deserve. USBC looks forward to partnering with both public and private entities on implementation of the action steps.”

For more information on the Call to Action, visit the Surgeon General’s website, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/breastfeeding/index.html>. For a media contact list to answer questions about the Surgeon General’s Call to Action, see <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/Portals/0/USBC-SGCTA-Media-Contact-List.pdf>. To receive updates and information from USBC, please considering signing on to support *Breastfeeding: A Vision for the Future*. USBC publications, including an analysis of the [barriers to exclusive breastfeeding](#), can be downloaded from [USBC’s Publications page](#). To locate health care providers and knowledgeable breastfeeding support personnel that can offer assistance and answer questions about breastfeeding, visit [USBC’s FAQ page](#).

*USBC is an organization of organizations. Opinions expressed by USBC are not necessarily the position of all member organizations and opinions expressed by USBC member organization representatives are not necessarily the position of USBC.*

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**The Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition (MBC)** works collaboratively to create an environment in Minnesota where breastfeeding is recognized and supported as vital to the health and development of children and families. The coalition has representation from state and local health departments, WIC, hospitals, La Leche League and other organizations and individuals who support and promote breastfeeding. For more information visit, [www.mnbreastfeedingcoalition.org](http://www.mnbreastfeedingcoalition.org).

**United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC)**

The United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) is an independent nonprofit coalition of more than 40 nationally influential professional, educational, and governmental organizations. Representing over half a million concerned professionals and the families they serve, USBC and its member organizations share a common mission to improve the Nation’s health by working collaboratively to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding. For more information on USBC, visit [www.usbreastfeeding.org](http://www.usbreastfeeding.org).

