

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
AND JANICE HAHN**

August 1, 2017

Proclaiming World Breastfeeding Week 2017

Breastfeeding reduces the risks of both acute and chronic health conditions for mothers and babies. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends about six months of *exclusive* breastfeeding and continued breastfeeding for as long as is mutually desired. Given the importance of infant nutrition, AAP has proclaimed breastfeeding a *public health issue* and not just a lifestyle choice.

As a result of California’s strong breastfeeding laws, research shows that the odds of a baby ever being breastfed is 225 percent greater in California than in other states which lack similar public policy, and the odds of a baby being breastfed at six months is 102% greater in the state, where the Labor Code has enforcement provisions with regard to workplace accommodation, breastfeeding in public, and hospital infant feeding policies. California laws help remove systemic barriers that prevent women from reaching their own breastfeeding goals.

Families in California benefit from the Paid Family Leave Law, which allows new families to take partial paid leave to bond with their new children through the State’s Employment Development Department’s Paid Family Leave program. This program was established to double the median duration of breastfeeding, even among low wage employed mothers. Unfortunately, Los Angeles County (County) has the lowest awareness of this law throughout the State and work still needs to be done to educate families.

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California leads the nation with 94 hospitals adopting the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding through the Baby-Friendly™* Hospital Designation process. California legislation also calls for all birthing facilities to achieve this designation or a similar one by 2025. This will help ensure that all mothers who want to breastfeed are given the support and counseling needed to meet their health care goals. Locally, 61 percent, or 34, of the hospitals in the County have achieved Baby-Friendly™ Hospital Designation.

California is also leading the nation in supporting employed mothers to breastfeed with worksite lactation accommodations and protections. The Affordable Care Act requires health insurance payers to provide quality and effective breastfeeding support, supplies and counseling when mothers need assistance with breastfeeding challenges or when they return to work or school.

The County is the largest employer in the region and leads by example with a strong worksite lactation accommodation policy and programs that go beyond the requirements of the State law. Additionally, Women Infants and Children (WIC) programs, which serve 67 percent of all infants born in the County, provide high quality breastfeeding support for mothers and infants. In community clinics and medical offices, women enrolled in the comprehensive perinatal services program also receive breastfeeding support.

In celebration of World Breastfeeding Week, the County should continue to address barriers to breastfeeding by informing all new mothers of their rights under California's breastfeeding laws and support their intent to breastfeed.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Proclaim the week of August 1st to 7th, 2017 as World Breastfeeding Week in Los Angeles County and acknowledge the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action's 2017 World Breastfeeding Week theme, "Sustaining Breastfeeding Together" with the goal of empowering all women, working in both the formal and informal sectors, to adequately combine work with child-rearing, particularly breastfeeding; and continue to:

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- 1) Encourage all hospitals in the County to adopt policies that encourage and support exclusive breastfeeding at birth and throughout early childhood;
- 2) Encourage health care systems and child care providers, including all Federally Qualified Health Centers and Independent Practice Associations, to promote breastfeeding and accommodate breastfeeding families through the adoption of *9 Steps to Breastfeeding-Friendly: Guidelines for Community Health Centers and Outpatient Care Settings* as recommended by the California Department of Public Health;
- 3) Urge all County employees to promote the important role breastfeeding plays in protecting the health of mothers and their children;
- 4) Encourage health care systems and communities to support initiatives that increase awareness of the need for, and access to, donor breast milk for the most vulnerable infants;
- 5) Encourage all employers in the County to adopt workplace lactation accommodation policies in accordance with California Labor Code 1030-33; and
- 6) Recommend that County residents support breastfeeding and make an informed choice about the care and feeding of their infants.

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(ECW/KD)