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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **August is Breastfeeding Promotion Month in Illinois**

***Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Supports World Breastfeeding Week  
August 1-7, 2011***

Champaign, IL – Illinois Governor, Pat Quinn, has declared August 2011 as Breastfeeding Promotion Month in Illinois. The proclamation aims to increase public awareness of breastfeeding as the normal and expected way to feed all babies in Illinois. It works in conjunction with breastfeeding advocates in more than 170 countries worldwide who will celebrate the 20th anniversary of World Breastfeeding Week August 1-7, 2011. The 2011 theme is “Talk to Me! Breastfeeding - a 3D Experience!”

The benefits of breastfeeding are numerous, well known, and research based. Babies who are breastfed are protected against respiratory and ear infections, asthma, allergies, childhood cancer, and obesity. Mothers who breastfeed have a decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancers.

This year’s theme “Talk to Me! Breastfeeding - a 3D Experience!” focuses on the importance of communication in protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding as the normal way to feed babies. Creating and expanding communication about breastfeeding through social media outlets is leading to wider outreach and support in the community. Surfing the web for accurate breastfeeding information or sharing knowledge and experiences is just a click away.

Another opportunity to increase communication is through the Peer Counselors at local WIC agencies or health departments like the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD). Peer counselors are women who have breastfed their own babies and want to help other women successfully breastfeed. Breastfeeding Peer Counselors receive regular training so they are able to provide quality support and assist breastfeeding women. Many peer counselors use text messaging and social media outlets such as Facebook to answer questions from breastfeeding moms and to provide continuing support.

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Sixty-eight percent of WIC moms in Champaign County choose to breastfeed. The most recent statistics show 32 percent of local WIC mothers breastfeeding for six months and 15 percent breastfeeding for one year. CUPHD has one Peer Counselor, 10 Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC), and one Internationally Board Certified Lactation Counselor (IBCLC) on staff.

“Breastfeeding is a special time to bond with your new baby. Benefits of breastfeeding your baby include a lower risk of obesity and childhood cancer, fewer ear infections, and a lower risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Breast milk is specially made for your baby and is easier to digest than infant formula. There are also benefits for mom including a lower risk of developing Type II diabetes, breast and ovarian cancer, and postpartum depression. Breastfeeding does not have to be painful or difficult. If you know someone who is breastfeeding, providing support is one of the most important things you can do,” said Nicole Wentz, WIC Program Coordinator at CUPHD.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Immunization Survey, 70 percent of mothers in Illinois start out breastfeeding. The newly established Healthy People 2020 goals aim to increase breastfeeding initiation to 81.9 percent, to increase breastfeeding at six months to 60.6 percent, and exclusive breastfeeding at three months to a target of 46.2 percent. The Healthy People 2020 goals also focus on increasing the number of employers who have worksite lactation support programs and strive to increase the number of babies born at hospitals that provide recommended care for breastfeeding moms and their babies.

Local events and activities have been planned to promote breastfeeding knowledge and awareness which include two radio segments on 93.5 FM on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Breastfeeding Appreciation Luncheon and Swim at Sholem Pool August 3<sup>rd</sup> from 1:00 – 4:00 PM, and the WCIA Morning Show on August 31<sup>st</sup>. In addition, a breastfeeding resource list is now available on Chambana Mom’s website, [www.chambanamoms.com](http://www.chambanamoms.com).

The Illinois Breastfeeding Blueprint provides action plans to support, advocate, and educate on the benefits of breastfeeding and can be found at [www.ilbreastfeedingblueprint.org](http://www.ilbreastfeedingblueprint.org).

For more information, please contact CUPHD at (217) 531-4292 or (217) 531-4319 and check us out on Facebook at *Champaign Urbana Public Health: Learn About Breastfeeding* and Twitter @Cuphdbreastfeed.

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