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For immediate release

Potent weapon in fight against diabetes--breastfeeding

Morrisville, NC- The United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA) recognizes the enormous toll that diabetes exacts on the health of our nation and joins the American Diabetes Association in recognizing November as American Diabetes Month. Almost 24 million Americans have type 1 or type 2 diabetes with another 57 million at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. The risk of developing diabetes looms over one out of every 3 children.

Since 1987, the death rate from diabetes has increased by 45%. Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults as well as the leading cause of kidney failure. Diagnosed diabetes in the United States costs a total of \$174 billion and consumes \$1 out of every \$5 in total healthcare costs.

Research has shown that certain lifestyle behaviors have the ability to prevent or lower the risk of developing diabetes. One potent health behavior that can help fight the battle against diabetes is breastfeeding. Studies point to the fact that there is a 15% decrease in the risk of type 2 diabetes for each year of lifetime lactation, even after adjusting for family history of diabetes mellitus, diet, exercise and overweight/obesity. Breastfeeding is associated with reduced blood glucose levels and a reduced incidence of type 2 diabetes among both women with a history of gestational diabetes and women in the general population. Lactation has also been associated with postpartum weight loss, reduced long-term obesity risk, and a lower prevalence of the metabolic syndrome.

Breastfed infants reap the benefits of a lower risk of developing type 1 and type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. They also enjoy a lower risk for the development of overweight and obesity, conditions that favor acquiring diabetes.

USLCA president, Laurie Beck, RN, MSN, IBCLC calls upon hospitals, physicians, and all other health care providers to recommend and support breastfeeding as an early preventive health behavior in the efforts to stop diabetes. "Breastfeeding and breastmilk are especially important in families with a history of diabetes. Breastfeeding education and support should be a normal part of counseling provided by health care workers to all childbearing women," says Beck.

Knowledgeable professional breastfeeding support can be obtained from lactation consultants with the IBCLC credential (International Board Certified Lactation Consultant). To locate a lactation consultant to assist with breastfeeding or expressing milk go to <http://www.ilca.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3337>.

USLCA is the professional association of over 3700 lactation consultants and health professionals dedicated to high quality support of breastfeeding.

USLCA is a national affiliate of ILCA