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For immediate release

Prevention of Obesity in Breastfeeding Mothers and their Babies

Morrisville, NC- The United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA) recognizes that obesity is a common problem in the United States for both women and children. January is Healthy Weight Management Month. One of the easiest and most healthy ways to prevent obesity is to breastfeed and to be breastfed. In the United States 32.7% of U.S. adults 20 years and older are overweight, 34.3% are obese and 5.9% are extremely obese. The American Obesity Association states that 15.5% of adolescents (ages 12 to 19) and 15.3% of children (ages 6 to 11) are obese. These alarming statistics also drive up health care costs by \$100 billion a year.

Since 1960, the rate of obese Americans has been on the rise. Children who are obese at a young age are at risk for diabetes, heart disease, metabolic disorders, depression and other diseases which will impact the rest of their lives. It is estimated that the increase of obesity in this country has also attributed to the death rate in our country. Each year in the U.S obesity causes at least 300,000 unnecessary deaths. The states with the lowest rates of breastfeeding generally demonstrate the highest rates of overweight and obesity.

Breastfeeding an infant through the first year can decrease childhood obesity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have reported that “for each month of exclusive breastfeeding, up to age 9 months, the risk of obesity is decreased by 4%.” By breastfeeding a child for 9 months or more there is a 30% less chance of a child being an overweight adult. Lactation has also been associated with postpartum weight loss in the exclusively breastfeeding mother.

Not only do breastfed infants reduce their likelihood of childhood obesity, they are taught and learn from an early age what the most nutritious foods are and how to make healthy choices. These healthy choices can potentially impact an adult’s health and can avoid the many diseases obesity can cause.

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 educate women on the prevention of obesity. “Educating parents on the optimal nutrition breast milk provides is important for healthy families and can decrease the rate of childhood obesity in this country.” 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 for assistance with breastfeeding go to <http://www.uslca.org>.