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For immediate release

### **US Lactation Consultant Association Commends Breastfeeding Support Provision in Health Care Reform**

**Morrisville, NC.** – The United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA) commends the passage of the workplace breastfeeding support provision in the [\*Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act\*](#) (also known as healthcare reform). The provision states that employers shall provide reasonable, unpaid break time and a private, non-bathroom place for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for up to one year after the child’s birth. Employers with less than 50 employees are not subject to the requirement if it would cause “undue hardship.”

USLCA President, Laurie Beck, RN IBCLC, applauds the legislation’s recognition of breastfeeding as an important public health issue. “Just as breastfeeding is good for babies, so too is supporting breastfeeding good for business,” says Beck. “[Research clearly demonstrates the value of breastfeeding](#) for the health of women and children as well as an employer’s bottom line. Medical experts and Federal health agencies agree that exclusive breastfeeding for six months with continued breastfeeding for the first year of life and beyond sets the stage for optimal maternal and child health outcomes. But returning to work can be a major hurdle for new mothers struggling to balance working and breastfeeding without the simple support measures this law ensures.”

Although many are aware of the health benefits of breastfeeding, employers may not recognize the economic benefits that accrue to them also. [The Business Case for Breastfeeding](#), published in 2008 by the Department of Health and Human Services, demonstrates an impressive return on investment for employers that provide workplace lactation support, including lower health care costs, reduced absenteeism, and lesser turnover rates. Employees whose companies provide breastfeeding support consistently report improved morale, better satisfaction with their jobs, and higher productivity.

It takes little for a company to provide lactation support. Basic needs include a clean place to express milk in privacy and break time to express milk approximately every 3 hours during the work period. A model law in Oregon defines reasonable time for milk

expression as 30 minutes for every four hours worked; a good match between natural breastfeeding cycles and the rhythms of the workday. A growing number of companies across the United States offer worksite lactation programs that also include access to information and professional support from a lactation consultant or other health experts.

Currently, [24 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia](#) have legislation related to breastfeeding in the workplace. The new federal provision will provide a minimum level of support in *all* states, but it will not preempt a State law that provides stronger protections.

After championing the most detailed of the state workplace support laws in Oregon (passed in 2007), U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley introduced “Reasonable Break Time for Nursing Mothers” as an amendment to the Senate HELP Committee’s health reform bill last year.

Although the law is effective immediately upon President Obama’s signing of the [Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#), the U.S. Department of Labor must now work to define terms and enforcement procedures. USLCA will be closely monitoring and supporting this process and stands ready to support employers and breastfeeding employees with tools, information, and resources. Employers, human resources managers, and breastfeeding employees who are interested in helping to establish worksite lactation programs at their place of employment can find a list of frequently asked questions on the [US Breastfeeding Committee website](#).

For more information and to access copies of *The Business Case for Breastfeeding* resources, visit [The National Women’s Health Information Center](#). To locate health care providers and knowledgeable breastfeeding support personnel that can offer assistance and answer questions about breastfeeding, visit the USLCA website.

USLCA president, Laurie Beck, RN, MSN, IBCLC calls upon hospitals, physicians, and all other health care providers to recommend and support breastfeeding as the only nutrition for babies and young children. “Educating parents on the optimal nutrition breast milk provides is important for families and the health of the children in the United States” says Beck.

Knowledgeable professional breastfeeding support can be obtained from lactation consultants with the IBCLC credential (International Board Certified Lactation Consultant). To locate lactation consultants for assistance with breastfeeding go to <http://www.uslca.org>.