



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **KCHD Receives County Proclamation for World Breastfeeding Month**

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Board of Commissioners issued a proclamation, calling on the community to support breastfeeding mothers in August, World Breastfeeding Month. The Kent County Health Department has numerous programs to educate and support families who breastfeed.

“Breastfeeding offers benefits to the infant, helping build a strong immune system,” says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “Breast milk contains enzymes and antibodies that reduce the risk of respiratory illness, stomach ailments, allergies and ear infections.” Research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show nursing can also decrease the risk of obesity, childhood leukemia, other forms of cancer, and the risk of Sudden Unexplained Infant Death as well.

KCHD encourages breastfeeding to clients of the federally-funded Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and has several peer counselors available to assist women with questions about breastfeeding. Numerous KCHD employees are also involved in the Breastfeeding Coalition, made up of representatives from area community organizations and hospitals.

Mothers who nurse lose weight from their pregnancy faster than those who do not. Breastfeeding helps women heal faster after childbirth, can lower stress, and can reduce the risk of breast and uterine cancer. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding exclusively for baby’s first six months. AAP recommends breastfeeding for the first year, and does not put an upper limit on how long to continue, as long as it fits with the mother’s and baby’s mutual determination.

A new study, published this week in JAMA Pediatrics, claims that breast milk could make a child smarter later in life. Researchers studied data from over 1300 mothers and children in the U.S., looking at factors such as frequency of breastfeeding, the mother’s intelligence, the parents’ education levels, and the type of childcare the baby received. The research team measured cognitive development of the children at age 3. The findings in this particular study support a link between breastfeeding and cognitive development.

The Proclamation from the Kent County Board of Commissioners is attached. Resources for breastfeeding families can be found at [www.kentcountybreastfeeding.org](http://www.kentcountybreastfeeding.org).

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).



PROCLAMATION BY THE KENT COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, optimal health nutrition is of vital significance in the early months and years of life and is fundamental to the prosperity and livelihood of societies; and

WHEREAS, breastfeeding is one of the most easily utilized and cost-effective prevention strategies available worldwide for a variety of infections and many chronic and acute diseases, including diarrhea, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, diabetes, obesity, and certain childhood cancers; and

WHEREAS, breastfeeding enriches the bonding process between mother and child; and

WHEREAS, continued support to sustain breastfeeding is the vital foundation for success and should be offered in a variety of ways; and

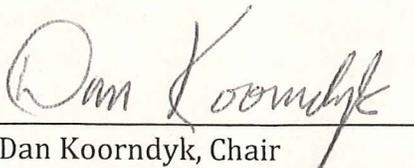
WHEREAS, Kent County and its Health Department recognize the critical importance of cooperation and collaboration for continued support to breastfeeding families; and

WHEREAS, the Health Department supports the Breastfeeding Coalition consisting of representatives of hospitals, community organizations and interested mothers in efforts to promote and support breastfeeding and the use of human milk through education, outreach and advocacy; and

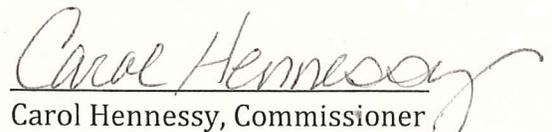
WHEREAS, the Health Department offers peer counseling in its WIC program and reaches out to varying populations through support groups in efforts to encourage breastfeeding; and

WHEREAS, World Breastfeeding Month is a time to recognize the importance of providing support and encouragement to breastfeeding mothers and celebrate the theme, "Breastfeeding Support: Close to Mothers."

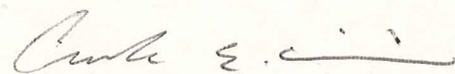
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Kent County, through its Board of Commissioners, calls upon members of our community to join in support of breastfeeding mothers in recognition of August 2013 as WORLD BREASTFEEDING MONTH.

  
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Dan Koorndyk, Chair

Kent County Board of Commissioners

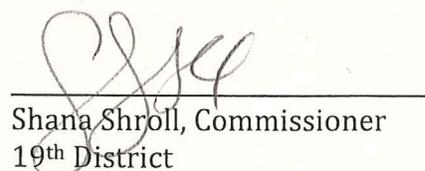
  
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Carol Hennessy, Commissioner

14<sup>th</sup> District

  
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Candace Chivis, Commissioner

17<sup>th</sup> District



  
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Shana Shroll, Commissioner

19<sup>th</sup> District