

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: _____ at (_____) _____ - _____
(Breastfeeding coordinator or director) (phone number)

August Is World Breastfeeding Month

Name of local agency or clinic site

Address (City) (State)

will celebrate World Breastfeeding Day August 1, 2002, with

(events or activities)

from: _____ to: _____
(time) (location)

The celebration marks the beginning of World Breastfeeding Month 2002, an annual campaign to increase public awareness of the importance of breast-feeding. The campaign is sponsored by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) in conjunction with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, La Leche League International and the Texas Department of Health.

"Healthy Mothers for Healthy Babies" is the theme of this year's campaign, which will focus on the health benefits breastfeeding provides the mother. While providing excellent health benefits to the baby, breastfeeding helps the new mother heal after giving birth, reduces her risk for hemorrhaging, and helps use calories to lose weight. Breastfeeding mothers are at lower risk for ovarian cancer and osteoporosis and may also be at lower risk for breast cancer. The goal of the Texas Department of Health is to have 75 percent of all Texas infants breastfeeding at hospital discharge and 50 percent still breastfeeding when they are 6 months old.

Current Texas breastfeeding rates are 67 percent at hospital discharge and only 28 percent at 6 months.

The Texas Position Statement on Infant Feeding, a collaborative effort of Texas health-related organizations, consumers and professionals strongly supports breastfeeding as the optimal way to feed infants. The Texas Department of Health and more than 32 other health organizations and insurance companies have endorsed this position statement. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding the first 6 months of life and continuation of breastfeeding for the first year of a baby's life or longer.

Doctor Eduardo Sanchez, Commissioner of Health, says, August 1, 2002, marks the twelfth anniversary of the signing of the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding, which recognizes the importance of breastfeeding to infant and maternal health as well as the social, economic and ecological benefits it provides to the family and society.

The declaration, adopted in 1990 by 32 governments and 10 United Nations agencies, states: "As a global goal for optimal maternal and child health and nutrition, all women should be enabled to practice exclusive breastfeeding, and all infants should be fed exclusively on breastmilk from birth to 4 to 6 months of age. Thereafter, children should continue to breastfeed while receiving appropriate and adequate complementary foods for up to 2 years of age or beyond. This child feeding ideal is to be achieved by creating an appropriate environment of awareness and support so that women can benefit in this manner." WIC clinics across the state have been provided with promotional materials. These materials will be displayed and distributed at local WIC clinics to honor breastfeeding clients and educate pregnant women about breastfeeding.