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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**GOING FOR THE GOLD: WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2008**  
**USBC Recommends Mother Support for Six Months of Exclusive Breastfeeding**

**Washington, DC**—This week, August 1-7, the United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) proudly joins organizations from more than 120 countries to celebrate World Breastfeeding Week 2008. In the United States, the percentage of infants ever breastfed increased from 60% of those born in 1993-94 to 74% of those born in 2005. Yet despite this increase in the number of women who initiate breastfeeding, only about 12% of infants continue to be breastfed exclusively for a full six months. Exclusive breastfeeding through six months of age, defined as an infant's consumption of human milk with no supplementation of any type (no nonhuman milk no juice, no water, and no foods) except for vitamins, minerals, and medications, is the gold standard recommend by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the Health Resources and Services! Administration, and the Office on Women's Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Scientific evidence clearly shows that breastfed infants have a lower incidence and severity of infections than formula-fed infants: less severe diarrhea, respiratory, and ear infections. Evidence also underscores that *lack* of breastfeeding is associated with increased risk of leukemia, obesity, diabetes mellitus, and deaths associated with sudden infant death syndrome. Yet without strong social, economic, and political support for a mother's choice to breastfeed, these benefits prove beyond the reach of many American families.

The theme of World Breastfeeding Week 2008 is *Mother Support: Going for the Gold*. USBC Chair Joan Younger Meek, MD, MS, RD, FAAP, FABM, IBCLC, urges us to rise to the challenge and meet the goal of six months of exclusive breastfeeding: "As a nation we still have far to go to ensure mothers have the opportunity to breastfeed exclusively for six months and to continue breastfeeding for the first year of life and beyond. The United States Breastfeeding Committee advocates for mother support in health systems, the workplace, the community, and the family."

The USBC is actively promoting measures to:

- Increase public awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding
- Create a favorable social environment for mothers who chose to breastfeed
- Support paid family leave
- Encourage employers to establish workplace lactation programs
- Support lactation training for maternity staff
- Change hospital practices to be more breastfeeding friendly
- Enable mothers to obtain support from appropriately trained lactation care providers following discharge from the hospital
- Increase the number of hospitals that make donor human milk available

For more information on World Breastfeeding Week, visit

<http://worldbreastfeedingweek.org>.

For more information on breastfeeding:

National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign — *Babies Were Born to Be Breastfed*:  
<http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/index.cfm?page=campaign>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding (2000):

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/bluprntbk2.pdf>

*The USBC is an organization of organizations. Opinions expressed by the USBC are not necessarily the position of all member organizations and opinions expressed by USBC member organization representatives are not necessarily the position of the USBC.*

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**United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC)**

The United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) is an independent nonprofit coalition of

43 nationally influential professional, educational, and governmental organizations. Representing over half a million concerned professionals and the families they serve, the USBC and its member organizations share a common mission to improve the Nation's health by working collaboratively to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding. For more information on the USBC, visit [www.usbreastfeeding.org](http://www.usbreastfeeding.org).

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