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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Communities Need to Work Together to Provide Support for Breastfeeding Mothers

**Troy, Ohio (8/28/2018)** - August is Breastfeeding Awareness Month. For this year's Breastfeeding Awareness Month, Ohio adopted the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) theme: *Breastfeeding, Foundation of Life*. This theme focuses on breastfeeding as a key to preventing hunger and malnutrition by ensuring food security for babies. By decreasing the burden on household income, breastfeeding provides a low-cost way to feed babies which contributes to poverty reduction.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding with the addition of appropriate solid food for the first year and beyond. Breastfeeding has monetary and lifesaving benefits, therefore, all elements of the community should cooperate and support breastfeeding to make a positive impact. Ultimately, our whole society benefits from having healthier mothers, babies and children when breastfeeding is promoted, protected and supported.

In 2016, Ohio ranked 38<sup>th</sup> in the nation in breast feeding initiation rate. One of the most important things businesses and the community can do to encourage breastfeeding is to allow mothers to feel comfortable nursing in public. Hungry babies need to eat and Ohio law (*Section 3781.55 of the Ohio Revised Code*) allows breastfeeding in public. Businesses can show their support by placing the "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" universal sign for breastfeeding in their windows and educate their staffs on the acceptance of breastfeeding in their establishments. They can also encourage their employees and provide a private space (other than a bathroom) to pump. This will increase employee retention and reduce medical costs.

Hospitals can adopt the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding* as an indication that they are dedicated to supporting new mothers who choose to breastfeed. By eliminating formula gifts to





breastfeeding mothers, they send the message that they believe mothers can make enough milk to breastfeed exclusively.

Educational institutions can support breastfeeding by presenting age appropriate education on the anatomy and physiology of the human body. Local county fairs can teach young children about how other mammals feed their young with milk that is made just for them. Child care providers and libraries can also stock children's books that show breastfeeding as a normal part of family life.

Social media can also provide support to breastfeeding mothers through Facebook and Twitter. Breastfeeding mothers can reach out through groups and chatrooms and get the support they need to feel normal in a formula feeding culture.

Breastfeeding is a personal choice, but communities play a vital role in informing and supporting a mother's decision to breastfeed her baby. Returning our communities back into a breastfeeding supportive culture will take efforts by family, friends, employers, educational institutions, hospitals and businesses.

**For more information** about breastfeeding go to [www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding) or contact Miami County WIC at 937-573-3553.

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