

Draft Proclamation: August 2020 as Breastfeeding Awareness month in Michigan

EXAMPLES:

- [2018 Breastfeeding Month](#)
- [2019 Black Breastfeeding Week](#)

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding is a public health imperative and is central to successful health equity strategies that confront racism, classism, and sexism which are the root causes of inequities;

WHEREAS, Disparities in breastfeeding rates and other maternal and infant health outcomes are most drastic and evident for Black and Indigenous families than for other Michigan families;

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding is a key strategy for combating the maternal and infant mortality crisis in the state of Michigan. Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women; Black and Indigenous infants are twice as likely to die before their first birthday than white infants; and Latinx families endure a higher rate of infant mortality than white families;

WHEREAS, Optimal breastfeeding rates for Michigan families could have saved the lives of nearly 700 infants who died in Michigan before their first birthday in 2019;

WHEREAS, Human milk serves as medicine for the 10 percent of Michigan babies born prematurely every year with higher numbers for Black infants, including Detroit's preterm birth rate of 15.3 percent the second-highest ranked city in the nation.

WHEREAS, Human milk sharing programs are key to eliminating diseases like necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) for Michigan's most fragile babies,

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding is a key disease prevention strategy over the lifecourse, including but certainly not limited to breast, ovarian, and uterine cancers, leukemia, cardiovascular disease and stroke, diabetes, and other metabolic diseases, all of which disproportionately impact Black and Indigenous people of color;

WHEREAS, Associated medical cost differences based on breastfeeding equals a savings of \$40.2 million per year in the U.S. medical system;

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding is a natural, renewable resource and offers society key environmental benefits such as the reduction of carbon emissions and waste, especially in our Michigan communities hardest hit by ongoing toxicity and environmental crises;

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding support is a key strategy for mitigating the long-term health impacts of natural and human-caused disasters, especially for poor and low-income Michiganders;

WHEREAS, Everyone in society benefits from breastfeeding success, so must everyone contribute to the success of breastfeeding to ensure a healthy future for all Michigan residents;

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding support in childcare settings leads directly to increased health, educational, developmental, and improved breastfeeding continuation outcomes for the 64 percent of Michigan children under six years of age in childcare;

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding support in child custody arrangements improves bonding, attachment, and outcomes for both parents, and stimulates healthy emotional and physical development for the child;

WHEREAS, Prison lactation support programs reduce the rate of recidivism by up to 50 percent and substantially lowers the risk of infant mortality for children with an incarcerated parent;

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding support in the workplace yields a 3-to-1 return on investment for the employer, while increasing employee work satisfaction, loyalty, and attendance, and contributes to the success of the entire business through retention of experienced employees, reduction in sick time taken by employees for children's illnesses, and lower health care and insurance costs.

WHEREAS, When hospitals and health systems adopt the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding to normalize and mandate evidence-based maternity care policies and practices that support breastfeeding, breastfeeding rates improve, regardless of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status;

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding support by diverse, multidisciplinary care teams who reflect and represent the people they serve is the most influential and effective way to improve breastfeeding outcomes;

WHEREAS, Community health workers, such as community-based doulas and the WIC Peer Counseling support program, help to diversify lactation support and increase breastfeeding rates in local communities across the state of Michigan;

WHEREAS, Equitable compensation for lactation supporters is necessary for growth and sustainability of this key public health workforce, ensuring that breastfeeding support is accessible to Black and Indigenous families of color;

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding is key to reclamation of traditional birth and breastfeeding practices by Black and Indigenous communities throughout Michigan lost to the continued and detrimental effects of colonialism and chattel slavery;

WHEREAS, Breastfeeding in public is protected under the 2014 “Breastfeeding Anti-Discrimination Act” in Michigan;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Gretchen Whitmer, governor of Michigan, join with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Michigan Breastfeeding Network, to hereby proclaim August 2020 as Breastfeeding Awareness month in Michigan.