

# WHY BREASTFEEDING?

## BREASTFEEDING IS BOTH A RACIAL EQUITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH IMPERATIVE.

Human milk-feeding benefits parents, children, families, society, and the environment, including:

- Reducing the risk of reproductive cancers, maternal mortality, postpartum depression, diabetes, and hypertension over the life course for the breastfeeding parent
- Decreasing the risk of ear infections, infant mortality, diarrhea, leukemia, obesity, and ADHD for the child
- Providing workplace lactation support programs bring a 3-to-1 return on investment for employers through reduced absenteeism, higher morale, and lower insurance costs

**"WE RECOMMEND EXCLUSIVE HUMAN MILK-FEEDING FOR THE FIRST 6 MONTHS OF LIFE, AND CONTINUATION UNTIL 2 YEARS OF AGE OR THE TIME MUTUALLY DESIRED BY MOTHER AND CHILD."**

- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

**\*NOTE - THE NATURAL AGE OF WEANING FOR HUMANS IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN AGES 3 AND 5**

Human milk-feeding is the most cost-effective maternal child health strategy (1).

Human-milk feeding is central to reclaiming traditional birth practices from the detrimental and ongoing impacts of colonialism and chattel slavery on Indigenous and Black communities.

Breastfeeding in public is protected under the 2014 "Breastfeeding Anti-Discrimination Act" in Michigan.

85-87% of Michigan families initiate breastfeeding (2).

Only 58% of birthing people reported breast/chest-feeding at three months (duration), and there are disparities in initiation and duration that must be addressed (3).

## BREASTFEEDING SAVES LIVES, ESPECIALLY IN EMERGENCIES.

(1) World Health Organization; (2) Michigan PRAMS; (3) State of Michigan Breastfeeding Plan: State Strategies to Advance Breastfeeding Practice 2021-2024

**"OUR SYSTEMS ARE NOT SET UP FOR BREASTFEEDING FAMILIES. ESPECIALLY FOR BLACK AND INDIGENOUS FAMILIES, TRADITIONAL BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES WERE INTENTIONALLY STOLEN AND ERASED. THIS LEGACY CONTINUES IN OUR POLICIES AND CULTURAL PRACTICES TODAY AND IT IS HARMING EVERYONE. IN ORDER TO PUT BREASTFEEDING SUCCESS WITHIN REACH, WE NEED TO CHANGE SYSTEMS, NOT FAMILIES."**

- Shannon McKenney Shubert, MPH, CLC, MIBFN Executive Director

## ABOUT MIBFN

### Who We Are:

We are a broad, diverse network of breastfeeding supporters throughout Michigan who are committed to disrupting systemic oppression and creating the conditions that are necessary to reclaim human milk feeding as the normal standard for infant and young child feeding via changes in policies and cultural norms. We serve in solidarity with the breastfeeding supporters and organizations who are led by and serving the families most disproportionately impacted by systemic oppression. As of Q1 2022, our current network consists of:

- 7 board members
- 6 staff members
- 13 Community Building partners & organizations
- 22 members of 2 Advocacy working groups
- 102 local breastfeeding supporters & organizations

### MIBFN is also a member organization of the following:

- United States Breastfeeding Committee
- Michigan Council for Maternal Child Health
- Coalition of stakeholders for the advancement of protections for incarcerated birthing persons

### Who currently supports our work?

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • 9 foundations              | • 2 insurance providers    |
| • 7 state health departments | • Approximately 150 donors |

### How We Serve:

MIBFN collaborates with organizations and individuals to bring about actionable, system-level changes that are centered on the diverse experiences of Michigan families with young children. To that end, our mission is to advocate, educate, and community-build alongside families and organizations for the advancement of an equitable, just, and breastfeeding-supportive culture.

### We envision:

- Human milk feeding-supporters of every identity serving in solidarity with Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized folx, dismantling unjust and inequitable systems of oppression – white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism.
- Building new systems that support human lactation centered in equity and justice.
- Decolonization and reclamation of traditional birth, lactation and infant feeding cultural norms.
- Black joy and Indigenous communities thriving.