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For Immediate Release:

Advocates Highlight Critical Need For Public Support for Nonprofit, Pasteurized Donor Human Milk Banking in the Northwest

Northwest Mothers Milk Bank (NWMMB), the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) and the Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon (BCO) held a press event on May 5th, 2015 to spotlight the need for public policy and support advancing human milk and breastfeeding as a primary strategy for improving the health of the most vulnerable citizens, babies.

The scientific evidence has shown breastfeeding and human milk provide a species specific, biologically superior start in life. However, when a baby is born too soon from a mother whose body wasn't meant to birth that early, breast milk is in scarce supply. Northwest Mothers Milk bank is the community benefit, nonprofit milk bank making sure milk from Northwest mothers benefits Northwest babies. NWMMB supports the proven infant health benefits of local sourcing and distribution through safe screening and pasteurization of DONOR human milk.

Neonatologist Stefanie Rogers, from Providence Hospitals, said, *"It shouldn't be who you know, your access to information or how much money you have that determines your ability to provide human milk, for your child."* Human Milk Banking Association of North America President, Pauline Sakamoto said, *"A strong milk bank is insurance for breastfeeding and successful breastfeeding lays the best foundation for a strong donor base for milk banks to meet the medical need of all Oregon babies."*

Compared to premature infants given formula, those given donor human milk have:

- Shorter lengths of stay in the Neonatal ICU or NICU
- Savings of an estimated \$8000 per infant
- Fewer serious infections
- Fewer cases of *necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC)*, a devastating intestinal infection in NICU infants)

In Oregon there are between 44,000-46,000 births each year

- 2700-3000 premature births
- 440-500 of those are under 1500gm, (3.3 lbs.)

There are about 30-50 cases of NEC in Oregon each year:

- Donor human milk could prevent up to 75% of those cases
- Cost savings of \$7 million- \$15 million per year in immediate expenses
- Lifelong savings from prevention of severe disabilities associated with *NEC*

Marion Rice, Executive Director of the Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon said, *"The need to advance equitable public policy is made louder with every threat from for profit companies seeking to pay women to separate babies from their mothers milk under the guise of economic opportunity or personal empowerment. With every new study released supporting the health evidence for the importance of human milk in the first 1000 days of life, the need becomes clearer and the call to action stronger to invest in identifying and addressing obstacles to greater availability of banked human milk for fragile infants."*

www.breastfeedingor.org

www.nwmmb.org

www.hmbana.org