



Contact:
Marion Rice, BCO
marion@breastfeedingor.org
503.708.0707

April 8, 2017
For Immediate Release:

Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon: STATEMENT ON INTERNET SALE OF HUMAN MILK

The purchasing of human milk over the Internet presents a potential risk to the infant receiving the milk. A recent study released April 6, 2015 in the Journal *Pediatrics* shows, 11 out of 102 samples of **human milk bought over the Internet tested positive for cows milk DNA, suggesting that the milk had cows milk added to it**¹. Babies' digestive tracts are not fully developed until they are at least 6 months old. Babies don't produce a broad enough spectrum of stomach enzymes to fully digest anything other than human milk until 6-9 months.² For infants, **not being breastfed is associated with an increased incidence of infectious morbidity, including otitis media, gastroenteritis, and pneumonia, as well as elevated risks of childhood obesity, type 1 and type 2 diabetes, leukemia, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)**³.

The Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon (BCO) acknowledges the scientific evidence of the positive role of breastfeeding and mother's milk in improving health outcomes for mothers and babies. In alignment with our colleagues at the Human Milk Banking Association of North America, (HMBANA) BCO believes human milk should be distributed to those babies who have the most critical need, without regard to income, race, ethnicity, geography or educational level of parents. **Creating financial incentives for women to sell their milk could prematurely end breastfeeding and or cause women to alter the milk in some way to increase quantity as we see revealed in the study released in *Pediatrics***⁴

The current cost of and limited access to human donor milk make it out of reach for many families,

¹ www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2014-3554

² Infant digestive system development. 2011. <http://www.livestrong.com/article/252816-infant-digestive-system-development/>.

³ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2812877/>

⁴ www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2014-3554

which may create potential health inequities thereby compromising the potential future health of all babies. **BCO supports strategies to build capacity for Northwest Mothers Milk Bank to meet the potential demand for all babies to receive ethically sourced, screened and pasteurized human milk when they need it.**

“Selling human milk without any consumer protections in place puts vulnerable babies at significant risk. Human milk is a precious and unique product created by humans (mothers) for humans (babies). Unfortunately, as shown by this recent study, there are people who are willing to risk babies’ health in order to turn a profit.”- **Nan Dahlquist, MD, IBCLC, FAAP, FABM. AAP Chapter Breastfeeding Coordinator, Director of Westside Breastfeeding Center at Hillsboro Pediatric Clinic, LLC.**

The rush by some companies to commodify human milk in the name of economic empowerment for women and increasing the supply of milk for babies will among other negative outcomes, disadvantage lower socio-economic families by creating a price for milk, which will further limit access. In addition, companies that seek to remove milk from communities and centralize collection and distribution of human milk will discourage local sourcing and the proven health benefits for babies in that locale.

The Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon urges mothers who want to share milk to be screened through Northwest Mothers Milk Bank and to give milk to this trusted community resource. The more donors we have, the more milk will be available to meet the needs of both hospitalized infants and infants in the community with need. A robust, accessible, safe and equitably distributed supply of milk will provide the best protection now and in the future for our most vulnerable Oregonians.

The BCO is a statewide organization of organizations. Opinions expressed by the BCO are not necessarily the position of all organizations participating with BCO in the statewide coalition and opinions expressed by BCO representatives are not necessarily the position of the BCO.

© 2015 by the Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon.

www.breastfeedingor.org