

Joint Position Statement

JOINT STATEMENT ON BREASTFEEDING

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) value the growing partnership between registered nurses and registered midwives in Canada. CNA and CAM both regard increasing the development of interprofessional models for health services delivery as important for improving access to primary maternity care.¹

Nurses and midwives in Canada and around the world have significant opportunities to work together to promote the best possible start in life for babies by, among other health promotion actions, advocating for breastfeeding and policies that support breastfeeding. With that view, CNA and CAM join in endorsing the World Health Organization's *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*.²

While supporting a woman's right to decide the method of feeding her child, registered nurses and registered midwives in Canada are strong advocates of breastfeeding and will work with their clients, other health-care professionals and public policy-makers in all sectors as necessary to encourage successful breastfeeding.³

The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding states that:

Breastfeeding is an unequalled way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of infants; it is also an integral part of the reproductive process with important implications for the health of mothers. As a global public health recommendation, infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health. Thereafter, to meet their evolving nutritional requirements, infants should receive nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods while breastfeeding continues for up to two years of age or beyond (p. 7).

The *Global Strategy* builds on and renews a commitment to other evidence-based international guidelines of importance to nurses and midwives, such as:

- the *Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative*,⁴ which aims to enhance support for breastfeeding in all maternity centres; and
- the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes*,⁵ which condemns the donation of free or subsidized breast-milk substitutes, and other products covered by the code, in any part of the health-care system.

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¹ The Canadian Nurses Association and the Canadian Association of Midwives were among six national organizations who partnered on the *Multidisciplinary Collaborative Primary Maternity Care Project* to promote interprofessional collaborative practice. Other partners were the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses Canada (AWHONN Canada), the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), and the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC). For more information see <http://www.mcp2.ca>.

² World Health Organization. (2003). *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*. Geneva: Author.

³ Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. (2003). *Breastfeeding Best Practices for Nurses – with 2007 Supplement*. Toronto: Author.

⁴ United Nations Children's Fund. (n.d.). The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. Retrieved November 2007, from http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/index_24806.html.

⁵ World Health Organization. (1981). *International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes*. World Health Assembly, Resolution 34.22. Geneva: Author.

