



Breastfeeding Coalition of Newfoundland & Labrador



La Leche League Canada
To encourage, promote and provide mother-to-mother breastfeeding support and educational opportunities as an important contribution to the health of children, families and society.



Newfoundland & Labrador
Association of Social Workers

Media Release

HEALTH COALITION CALLING FOR BREASTFEEDING TO BECOME A PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY

October 10, 2006 1000h

A coalition of nine professional and consumer organizations called on the provincial government to make breastfeeding a public health priority at a news conference today. At 63%, the province's breastfeeding initiation rate is the lowest in Canada and considerably lower than the national breastfeeding initiation rate of 85%.

President Sandra MacDonald of the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador said, "The province does not have a breastfeeding policy and we do not have dedicated funding to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. In a Joint Position Paper, *Breastfeeding- A Public Health Priority*, the Health Coalition is calling for Government leadership to increase our breastfeeding rates and correct our province's underperformance on this fundamental health practice."

The health coalition is calling on government to develop a comprehensive, coordinated and resourced approach to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding in the province. Donna Nolan, Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association Representative said, "The establishment of a provincial breastfeeding policy will contribute to improved public health and complement government's recent investments in its Provincial Wellness Plan and the Poverty Reduction Strategy."

Janine Woodrow, Co-Chair of Dietitians of Newfoundland and Labrador (a Member Group of Dietitians of Canada) explained, "Breastfeeding is widely accepted by the World Health Organization and Health Canada as the optimal method for infant feeding. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of disease, enhances social and emotional development, and has economic benefits for mothers, families and the health care system."

Dr. Terry O'Grady, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association pointed out, "Other provincial governments have established provincial breastfeeding policies with dedicated funding to implement programs to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and thereby, increase breastfeeding rates."

ARNNL President Sandra MacDonald concludes, “This health coalition of nine organizations believes the province’s approach to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding needs work. We believe Government leadership is essential to increase breastfeeding rates and to improve the nutrition and health of infants and children in the province.”

The Joint Position Paper, *Breastfeeding- A Public Health Priority*, was prepared and endorsed by a Health Coalition comprised of a wide network of professional and consumer organizations and experts that work collaboratively to advance breastfeeding in the province:

- Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Association of Midwives of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Breastfeeding Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Dietitians of Newfoundland and Labrador (A member group of Dietitians of Canada)
- La Leche League Canada – Atlantic Canada
- Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association
- Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association
- Newfoundland and Labrador Social Workers Association
- Pharmacists Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

The Joint Position Paper will be posted on www.arnnl.nf.ca Tuesday at 1000h.

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