

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

June 22, 2021

Proclaiming National Breastfeeding Month, World Breastfeeding Week, Native Breastfeeding Week, Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Breastfeeding Week & Black Breastfeeding Week 2021

Breast/chestfeeding reduces the risks of both acute and chronic health conditions for infants as well as lactating parents. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 6 months of exclusive breast/chestfeeding and continued breast/chestfeeding for as long as is mutually desired. Given the importance of infant nutrition, the American Academy of Pediatrics has proclaimed breast/chestfeeding a public health issue and not simply a lifestyle choice. Practitioners, parents, and community partners should continue to be made aware the of the unparalleled immunological, nutritional, and psychosocial benefits of breastfeeding and human milk for infants as well as the social-emotional benefits of breastfeeding for the lactating person, particularly in states of emergency.

Babies that exclusively breastfeed for the first six months of life have better long-term health outcomes, with lowered risk for ear infections, atopic dermatitis, gastrointestinal infections, asthma, diabetes, childhood leukemia, SIDS and childhood obesity. High breastfeeding initiation rates show that most mothers in the United States

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want to breastfeed and start out doing so. However, despite the recommendation to breastfeed exclusively for about the first 6 months, less than 50% of infants are exclusively breastfed through 3 months and about 25% were exclusively breastfed through 6 months. In addition, infant health outcomes differ substantially across racial/ethnic lines. In LA County, 57.2% of African American babies, 60.1% of Hispanic and 57.2% of Asian babies are exclusively breastfed compared to 78.2% of white babies. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding noted that even while researchers control for family income or education level, breastfeeding rates for infants of color are still lower than for White infants at birth, 6 months, and 12 months. Research increasingly shows that systemic racism plays a significant role in perpetuating these inequitable health outcomes.

California families benefit from Paid Family Leave, which allows families to take partially paid leave to bond with their new children through the Employment Development Department's Paid Family Leave (PFL) program. This program was found to double the median duration of breast/chestfeeding, even among low wage employed parents. However, not everyone knows about this benefit nor has access to it. Even with statewide benefits, Californians are caught between their work and family responsibilities. In California, 80 percent of Black mothers, 50 percent of Latina mothers and 47 percent of white mothers are key family breadwinners; and lack of, or limited, paid family leave means having to choose between your job and your family. With the unique complications created by the COVID-19 epidemic, even more education needs to be provided to families about their rights under PFL law throughout Los Angeles County.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim the month of August as National Breastfeeding Month, the week of August 1st -7th , 2021 as World Breastfeeding Week in Los Angeles County, declare the week of August 8th – 14th as Native Breastfeeding Week, declare the week of August 15th -21st AANHPI Breastfeeding Week, and declare the week of August 24th -31st as Black Breastfeeding Week, with the goals of advancing breast/chestfeeding as part of good nutrition, health protection, food security, and poverty reduction.

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