

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee



PROCLAMATION OF THE ALABAMA BREASTFEEDING COMMITTEE

Adopted on March 15, 2019 by the Alabama Breastfeeding Committee

WHEREAS, the Alabama Breastfeeding Committee's mission is to work toward the development of resources and partnerships that will lead to the effective promotion, protection, and support of breastfeeding within the State; and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), high breastfeeding initiation rates show that most mothers in the United States want to breastfeed and start out doing so. However, despite clinical recommendations to breastfeed exclusively for the first six months of life and to continue breastfeeding with the addition of complimentary foods for at least one year, babies across the U.S. are falling short of recommendations. Less than 50% of infants are exclusively breastfed through 3 months and only 25% are exclusively breastfed for 6 months. These rates suggest that mothers may not be getting the support they need from health care providers, family members, and employers to meet their breastfeeding goals; and,

WHEREAS, Alabama's breastfeeding rates are below the national average. According to the 2018 CDC Breastfeeding Report Card, just 68.1% of babies born in Alabama are ever breastfed and only 20.6% of babies are exclusively breastfed through the clinically recommended 6 months; and,

WHEREAS, in the aftermath of the recent devastating tornadoes in Alabama, volunteers from the Alabama Breastfeeding Committee were told by emergency response coordinators the only infant nutrition that would be available is infant formula "because it is so easy to purchase;" and,

WHEREAS, online searches reveal that FEMA only mentions infant formula, and not breastfeeding and breastfeeding equipment such as breast pumps, as part of its Critical Needs Assistance (CNA) program to assist individuals who are displaced from their primary residence due to a disaster; and,

WHEREAS, continuation of breastfeeding after a disaster is recommended as the safest form of infant nutrition by physician groups such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, by the U.S. Government through agencies such as the CDC and the Administration for Children & Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and by lactation support groups including the International Lactation Consultants Association (ILCA); the United States Lactation Consultant Association: United States Breastfeeding Committee; and,

WHEREAS, it is the position of the Alabama Breastfeeding Committee that FEMA should make breastfeeding support and supplies available to mothers and infants just as infant formula is made available through FEMA's Critical Needs Assistance (CNA).

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Executive Board of the Alabama Breastfeeding Committee, request assistance from Congressional leaders in getting FEMA to incorporate breastfeeding support and supplies into their Critical Needs Assistance (CNA) program and other programs that help vulnerable infants impacted by disasters.