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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AUGUST IS BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS MONTH**  
*Annual Celebration Highlights Breastfeeding as the Perfect Start to Lifelong Health*

YPSILANTI, Mich., August 13, 2012 – August is Breastfeeding Awareness Month. The Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition presents an awards ceremony and celebration on August 17<sup>th</sup> at the Washtenaw County Public Health Department, located at 555 Towner Street in Ypsilanti. Washtenaw County WIC participants and the community are invited to take part in a series of events this Friday about the importance of breastfeeding.

**Awards Ceremony and Celebration**

9:00-11:00 am Breastfeeding Friendly Business Awards Ceremony  
12:00-1:00 pm “Breastfeeding from the Public Health Perspective”  
Information Open House for County Employees  
1:30-3:30 pm “Care for Moms” Ice-cream Social and Educational  
Event for Expectant Moms, Dads, Grandparents and  
Support Persons. Includes booths, exhibits and  
activities for children.



“Lifelong health begins with breastfeeding,” says Keleigh Lee, Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition Co-Chair. “We want to make sure we are doing everything we can to promote and support breastfeeding for moms and babies.” Notably, Ms. Lee is a 2012 award recipient of the Michigan Breastfeeding Network, honored for her volunteer work with the

Coalition, support of WIC families and development of the Breastfeeding Friendly Business Awards Program in Washtenaw County.

Since 1992, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have reminded women and families of the vital importance of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding with complementary foods thereafter. Following these recommendations can potentially save the lives of about two million children around the world each year.

Breastfeeding is the most cost-effective way to decrease disease and save healthcare dollars. Research shows that infants who are not exclusively breastfed for their first six months of life are more likely to develop a wide range of chronic and acute diseases and conditions including ear infections, diarrheal diseases, asthma, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and respiratory illnesses. In addition, mothers who do not breastfeed are at increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Washtenaw County Public Health's Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program promotes breastfeeding as the optimal and preferred method of infant feeding. Studies show that WIC participants who report receiving prenatal and postpartum education on breastfeeding at their WIC clinic are more likely to breastfeed than those who never received education and support.

Anyone seeking information on breastfeeding or seeking help with workplace lactation support is encouraged to contact Gayathri Akella, MS, RD, CLE, IBCLC, Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coordinator and Coalition Co-Chair, 734-544-6794 or [akellag@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:akellag@ewashtenaw.org) and Keleigh Lee, Coalition Co-Chair, 734-218-0348 or [kelmlee@gmail.com](mailto:kelmlee@gmail.com). Visit the Coalition website at <http://www.washtenawbfcoalition.org/>.

Washtenaw County Public Health promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Visit us online at <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>.

More information about the Michigan Breastfeeding Network can be found at <http://www.mibfnetwork.org/>.

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