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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2014 Breastfeeding Friendly Business Awards Call for Local Nominations

YPSILANTI, Mich., July 8, 2014 – Washtenaw County Public Health and the Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition invite residents to nominate local businesses for the sixth annual Breastfeeding Friendly Business Awards. Nominations are due by Friday, July 18, 2014. A ceremony honoring the local award winners and celebrating the passage of Michigan's Breastfeeding Antidiscrimination Act is scheduled for August 22.

Residents may nominate local businesses that provide exemplary breastfeeding support to employees, customers or both by completing the 2014 survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WashtenawBFNominations.

"We're incredibly pleased that the right to nurse in public is now legally protected in Michigan, but we're also committed to honoring local organizations that go above and beyond to support breastfeeding mothers, their babies and their families," says Ellen Rabinowitz, MUP, health officer for Washtenaw County.

Last month, the Breastfeeding Antidiscrimination Act (Michigan Senate Bill 674) was signed into law and protects the right of mothers to breastfeed in any space that is open to the public, such as stores, restaurants and public transportation. Michigan joins forty six other states that have similar legislation in place.

Washtenaw County Public Health and Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition staff members were proud to witness the signing of the legislation and to support Senator Rebekah

Warren, a long-time champion of public breastfeeding as she has worked to guarantee this protection for Michigan mothers.

Pictured, left to right on June 24, 2014 in Lansing, MI: Kirk Profit, Governmental Consulting Services; Rebekah Warren, D-Ann Arbor; Governor Rick Snyder; Ellen Rabinowitz, health officer, Washtenaw County Public Health (WCPH); Erica McLeod, WIC breastfeeding peer counselor and baby Edmund; Lily Guzmán, senior management analyst, WCPH; Gayathri Akella, WIC service coordinator, WCPH.



Nominations for the 2014 Breastfeeding Friendly Business Awards can be submitted by the businesses themselves or by employees or customers. Since 2011, employers have been required to provide pumping accommodations to their breastfeeding employees; however, many have gone above and beyond this basic requirement.

"We want to recognize those corporations big and small that are supporting the health of moms, babies and families by supporting breastfeeding," says Gayathri Akella, MS, RD, CLE, IBCLC, Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coordinator and Coalition Co-Chair. "The freedom to nurse or pump comfortably – when needed – is critical," Akella continued.

Anyone seeking information on breastfeeding or seeking help with workplace lactation support is encouraged to contact Gayathri Akella at 734-545-3139 or akellag@ewashtenaw.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.

Michigan's Breastfeeding Antidiscrimination Act: http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2013-SB-0674.

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