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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 2013 Breastfeeding Friendly Business Awards Call for Local Nominations

YPSILANTI, Mich., July 11, 2013 – The Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition is now accepting local applications for the 2013 Breastfeeding Friendly Business Awards. To nominate an area business that provides exemplary breastfeeding support to its employees, its customers or both, please visit <a href="www.washtenawbfcoalition.org">www.washtenawbfcoalition.org</a>. Nominations must be received by close of business on Monday, August 5, 2013. An awards ceremony and Breastfeeding Awareness Month celebration is planned for Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup> at Washtenaw County Public Health.

The Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition is committed to promoting and protecting a mother's right to breastfeed her child for as long as she chooses, whether or not she returns to work. Since 2005, the Coalition has recognized local businesses that promote breastfeeding by supporting employees who need to express milk during work hours and by supporting breastfeeding customers. There are two types of awards: employee support and customer support. Some businesses may be eligible for both types of awards. All local employers and businesses, regardless of size or for-profit or non-profit status are encouraged to apply.

"Breastfeeding helps a new mother lose weight, and decreases the child's risk of becoming diabetic later in life. It's a win-win situation, and we encourage all mothers to breastfeed for at least six months if possible," says Dr. Alice Penrose, MD, MPH, Medical Director of Washtenaw County Public Health.

Breastfeeding is the most cost-effective way to decrease disease and save healthcare dollars. Doctors recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months after birth for the optimal health of a mother and her child. In addition, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

(P.L. 111-148) requires employers to provide "a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk" for up to a year after childbirth and in a private place, other than a bathroom. Similarly, the Surgeon General calls for "a society-wide approach to support mothers and babies who are breastfeeding."

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, 734-545-3139 or <a href="mailto:akellag@ewashtenaw.org">akellag@ewashtenaw.org</a> and Keleigh Lee, MA, IBCLC, Coalition Co-Chair, 734-218-0348 or <a href="mailto:kelmlee@gmail.com">kelmlee@gmail.com</a>. Visit the Coalition website at <a href="mailto:http://www.washtenawbfcoalition.org/">http://www.washtenawbfcoalition.org/</a>.

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

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