



## Position Statement Breastfeeding

*Healthy North Dakota* is a framework supporting North Dakotans in their efforts to make healthy choices by focusing on wellness and prevention – in schools, workplaces, senior centers, homes and anywhere people live, learn, work and play. Committees comprised of more than 400 North Dakotans representing about 150 agencies, organizations and businesses from across the state are identifying strategies to build a healthy North Dakota.

### Issue

Breastfeeding is universally endorsed by the world's health and scientific organizations as the best way to feed infants and young children. Research in the United States and throughout the world indicates that breastfeeding provides benefits to infants, women, families and society and that formula is nutritionally inferior to breastmilk.

### Position Adopted

All North Dakota mothers deserve the opportunity to breastfeed their infants, and all infants deserve the opportunity to be breastfed. Ensuring access to comprehensive, interdisciplinary, culturally appropriate lactation and breastfeeding care and services from preconception through weaning will empower women to breastfeed their infants exclusively for at least six months and to continue through the child's first year of life and beyond while introducing appropriate weaning foods.

### Justification

- Breastfeeding reduces an infant's risk of SIDS, asthma, infectious diseases, diabetes and childhood obesity.
- Mothers who breastfeed reduce their risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer and type 2 diabetes.
- The estimated cost of breastfeeding is about four times less than formula feeding (comparing the cost of formula to the increased food costs for the breastfeeding mother).
- Breastfeeding reduces the need for costly health services that must be paid for by insurers, government agencies or families.
- Breastfeeding reduces the number of sick days that families must use to care for their sick children.

### Goals of the Healthy North Dakota Breastfeeding Committee

1. Ensure access to comprehensive, current and culturally appropriate lactation care and services for all women, children and families.
2. Ensure that breastfeeding is recognized as the normal and preferred method of feeding infants and young children.
3. Advocate for policies that recognize and support the importance and practice of breastfeeding.
4. Increase protection, promotion and support for breastfeeding mothers in the work force.

### Contact for Further Information

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Prepared by the Healthy North Dakota Breastfeeding Committee and pending approval of all Healthy North Dakota partners.

### Sources

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