



Dear Representative Hughes,

As manager of the Maternity Outpatient Clinics & Services at The Children's Hospital at Providence, I would like to voice my support of House Concurrent Resolution No. 18. The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) is an evidence-based, quality improvement initiative designed to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.

The benefits of babies receiving human milk are far reaching. In fact there isn't another health campaign as impactful as breastfeeding is for both mothers and babies. Breastfeeding reduces obesity, diabetes, child abuse & neglect, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, urinary tract infections, hospitalizations, and even increases IQ scores to name just a sampling of the benefits. Feeding babies bovine based or soy based artificial milks, puts them at risk for a myriad of diseases and costs Alaskans millions of dollars every year.

Alaskan moms know this and that is why almost nine out ten moms initiate breastfeeding at birth. Unfortunately, too many of these mothers do not get the proper support and care needed to be successful with their breastfeeding goals. By three months of life, only 48% of mothers are still exclusively breastfeeding and the number drops again to 26% by six months of life.

The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative developed by the World Health Organization, is an evidence based program designed to improve outcomes for moms and babies. Hospitals and birthing facilities who adopt the principals of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, report increased patient satisfaction scores, reduced re-admissions for babies, and improved competency in nursing care.

As the first, and currently the only, Baby Friendly designated hospital in Alaska, Providence has certainly witnessed the benefits of this designation first hand. As health care costs in the US continue to rise, communities are called upon to reduce chronic diseases and associated costs. Feeding babies human milk is the simplest, cheapest and most effective method available to improve outcomes for some of our most vulnerable populations. Baby Friendly helps hospitals, help families to breastfeed.

Thank you for your work on House Concurrent Resolution No. 18. My staff and I fully support this resolution.

Sincerely,
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