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Breastfeeding acceptance up for World Breastfeeding Week 2005!

World Breastfeeding Week is August 1-7, 2005

San Jose, CA – According to a new survey released today, more Americans endorse breastfeeding and are comfortable with women breastfeeding in public. Men in particular are more supportive about breastfeeding. The National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign surveyed almost 1000 people before and after the Campaign's June 2004 launch, and came up with the following results:

- 69% of men were comfortable seeing a baby breastfed in public in 2005, compared to only 59% of men in 2004.
- 63% of men said they would be willing to have their own baby breastfed in public in 2005, compared to just 53% of men in 2004.
- In 2005, 67% of women and 62% of men felt the best way to feed a baby was to give only breast milk – up from 60% (women) and 50% (men) in 2004.
- In 2005, 59% of women and 65% of men agreed that babies should be breastfed exclusively for the first 6 months, up from 55% (women) and 53% (men) in 2004.

The Breastfeeding Task Force of Santa Clara Valley is one of the community-based organizations supporting the Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health to promote the Campaign, which has received several awards—most recently from La Leche League International. The Campaign's slogan, *Babies Were Born to be Breastfed*, is designed to increase breastfeeding awareness and to promote exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life.

“It seems that the messages are being heard and it has made breastfeeding more acceptable to people everywhere,” said registered dietitian and lactation educator Kathy Sweeney, RD, CLE, Chair of the Breastfeeding Task Force of Santa Clara Valley. “It’s interesting that men have really come on board. Perhaps in the past, they’ve thought this was a women’s ‘thing’ – but fathers’ support is critical when a mother breastfeeds.”

The campaign relied on Ad Council public service announcements on radio, TV, and in the print media to promote its message. The tracking report, based on telephone interviews across the United States, showed that those who had seen at least one of the campaign’s TV ads were more likely to agree that breastfeeding decreased a child’s risk of ear infections, obesity, respiratory illness, and diarrhea. More results showed that:

- 75% of people who had seen the TV ads disagreed that formula is as good as breast milk, compared to 59% of those who had not seen the ads.
- 59% of women who had seen the TV ads were more likely to be comfortable breastfeeding in public, compared to 39% of those who did not see the ads.
- 73% of women who had seen the TV ads were more likely to be comfortable seeing other women breastfeeding in public, compared to 55% of those who had not

These results are particularly interesting in light of the recent controversy over Barbara Walters’ negative comments about breastfeeding in public on ABC’s TV show, *The View*.

Breastfeeding-related events are planned all over the country during World Breastfeeding Week. Locally, the Breastfeeding Task Force of Santa Clara Valley will provide free educational resources to physicians and nurses in August. To recognize the exemplary efforts of companies that understand the need to provide an environment for employees to achieve a balanced work and family life, the Task Force will honor local employers with the Family Health Promotion Award on August 24 at a ceremony at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center in San Jose, CA.

To learn more about World Breastfeeding Week and the National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign, visit www.WomensHealth.gov, rated #1 among all breastfeeding Web sites by the Journal of Human Lactation; or call the Helpline at 1.800.994.WOMAN (9662), Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., EDT; or the Santa Clara County Breastfeeding Coordinator at 408.792.5052.

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