

**STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE**

2014

Source
HCR 18

**Legislative
Resolve No.**
44



Encouraging hospitals and birthing facilities in the state to participate in the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative and to support breastfeeding; and recognizing the benefits of breastfeeding.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS breastfeeding provides unique health benefits to babies, including nutrients that support infant brain development and lower rates of illness and disease; and

WHEREAS numerous studies demonstrate that children who have been breastfed have fewer and less serious illnesses than children who have not been breastfed; and

WHEREAS breastfeeding lowers the rate of acute otitis media by 40 percent, which provides economic benefits to Alaskans by reducing the costs of medical care; and

WHEREAS breastfeeding reduces obesity over the lifetime of an infant by 50 percent, saving Alaska residents approximately \$229,000,000 a year; and

WHEREAS children who have been breastfed are less depressed, anxious, and withdrawn, and experience fewer learning problems, fewer diagnoses of behavioral health and conduct disorders, lower rates of delinquent, aggressive, and antisocial behavior, and a lower

need for mental health services; and

WHEREAS the immediate skin-to-skin contact in breastfeeding enhances the emotional connection between the mother and infant that continues through the child's adolescent years and reduces the susceptibility of a person to prostitution and incarceration; and

WHEREAS breastfeeding for a total of 24 months over the mother's lifetime decreases the occurrence of premenopausal breast cancer by 50 percent, eliminating an average of \$52,560,000 of medical care costs in the state each year; and

WHEREAS breastfeeding decreases the incidence of insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus by 40 percent over an infant's lifetime, saving Alaska residents approximately \$321,785,600 a year; and

WHEREAS breastfeeding offers numerous health benefits to new mothers by reducing the mother's risk of acquiring breast and ovarian cancers and postpartum depression; and

WHEREAS breastfeeding provides economic benefits to families by decreasing the need to purchase infant formula; and

WHEREAS, based on the above health advantages, breastfeeding lowers the cost of medical care for Alaskans; and

WHEREAS studies have shown that the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative can decrease the likelihood of child abuse or neglect and a person's being at risk for sex trafficking; and

WHEREAS the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative crosses state and national boundaries in an effort to encourage and recognize hospitals that offer an optimal level of care for infant feeding; and

WHEREAS the defined term "baby-friendly" may be used only by maternity services that have adopted assessment standards for the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative; and

WHEREAS hospitals and birthing facilities receive and retain the baby-friendly designation by implementing the evidence-based program, Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding; and

WHEREAS babies born in hospitals and birthing facilities that follow the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding program have significantly higher rates of initiating and

extending breastfeeding than the national average;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes the unique physical, mental health, economic, and societal benefits that breastfeeding provides to babies, mothers, families, and communities; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature strongly encourages hospitals and birthing facilities in the state to receive the baby-friendly designation by implementing the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding program.