

Testimony in Support of HB 2284

Submitted on behalf of the March of Dimes
To the House Committee on Health and Human Services
February 17, 2005

On behalf of the volunteers and staff of the Greater Kansas Chapter of the March of Dimes, I would like to express our support for HB 2284, ensuring a woman's right to breastfeed in any place she has a right to be.

Breastfeeding offers a host of health benefits to infants. Breastmilk provides the ideal amounts of protein, sugar, fat and most vitamins a baby needs for healthy growth and development. Breastmilk also contains antibodies that help protect a baby from many infectious diseases. Studies show that breastfed babies are less likely than formula-fed babies to have ear infections, lower respiratory tract infections, meningitis, urinary tract infections, vomiting and diarrhea. Some studies also suggest that breastfeeding may offer babies some protection against sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), diabetes, obesity and asthma.

The March of Dimes supports the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation that infants be fed only breastmilk (no water, formula, other liquids or solids) for about the first six months, and that breastmilk should continue to be provided along with solid foods through at least the first year of life. Kansas is one of fourteen states that exceed the national objective of 75% of mothers initiating breastfeeding of their newborns. At six months of age, 37.3% of Kansas babies are still being breastfed, which is above the national average.

Breastmilk is the best food for babies, and a mother should be able to do what is best for her baby without fear of reprisal. For this reason, we respectfully ask for your support of HB 2284.

Danielle Huckins, Chair
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