

Draft Governor's Proclamation

State of Texas
Office of the Governor

A woman's choice about whether to breastfeed is a personal one. However, this decision is influenced by many factors. Friends, family members, health care providers, the media, social traditions, the work environment, and educational level all affect a woman's decision to breastfeed—as well as her ability to continue breastfeeding for the recommended length of time.

The Texas Department of State Health Services joins a worldwide campaign every August to raise awareness of the importance of breastfeeding for optimal infant and maternal health, as well as the social and economic benefits it provides to the family and society. This year's theme *Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work*, focuses involving the entire community in supporting breastfeeding moms.

All major health organizations agree—breastfeeding is the best feeding method for both babies and moms. Breastmilk helps infants form strong immune systems to fight many illnesses such as ear infections, incidences of diarrhea, and upper respiratory diseases. Breastfed infants have a decreased risk of several chronic diseases later in life including obesity, diabetes, and asthma. Mothers who breastfeed experience many positive physical effects including decreased risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and osteoporosis.

However, even with evidence-based research, many moms still never even try to breastfeed. Those that do initiate breastfeeding often stop because of lack of support from family, friends, healthcare providers, and other members of the community. Encouraging mothers to breastfeed their infants and encouraging the community to support breastfeeding are important steps in health promotion in Texas. The benefits for the state include not only healthier Texans, but also a significant reduction in health care costs now and in the future.

Texas is committed to increasing public support and acceptance of breastfeeding as the infant feeding norm. I encourage the entire Texas community to support our breastfeeding moms—in the hospital, home, workplace, and in public.

Therefore, I, Rick Perry, Governor of Texas, do hereby proclaim
August 2007 Breastfeeding Awareness Month
In Texas and urge the appropriate recognition whereof.