

# National WIC Association

For Immediate Release

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## Surgeon General Issues Support for Community Breastfeeding Initiatives

*Breastfeeding Will Gain National Support as WIC Strategic Plan is Released to Improve State and Local WIC Clinic Breastfeeding Services*

**WASHINGTON, DC, 21 January 2011** — Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin released “The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding” on January 20, which defined evidence-based strategies for communities to promote breastfeeding and reduce barriers that new mothers face. The issuance aligns with the release of the **National WIC Association’s (NWA)** Breastfeeding Strategic Plan ([click here](#)) to encourage all WIC programs to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. State and local WIC clinics will aim to increase breastfeeding rates through **NWA’s** “Six Steps to Achieve Breastfeeding Goals for WIC Clinics,” ([click here](#)) which promote breastfeeding as the infant feeding norm, provide breastfeeding-friendly environments, ensure access to well-trained breastfeeding clinic staff, develop procedures to accommodate breastfeeding mothers and babies, train all clinic staff members to become breastfeeding counselors and advocates, and support exclusive breastfeeding through assessment, evaluation, and assistance.

“The **National WIC Association** is proud of WIC’s role in promoting breastfeeding to the nation, indeed WIC breastfeeding rates have been on the rise since 1990 and **NWA’s** Breastfeeding Strategic Plan and Six Steps to Achieve Breastfeeding Goals for WIC Clinics will help to assure WIC’s role as the nation’s go to source for breastfeeding promotion and support,” said the Rev. Douglas A. Greenaway, **NWA’s** President & CEO. “Moreover, exclusive breastfeeding plays a key role in reducing childhood overweight and obesity, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), respiratory ailments, allergies, ear infections, along with many other illnesses, and has been linked to a lower risk of type 2 diabetes and certain breast and ovarian cancers for breastfeeding mothers.”

WIC serves children to age five, including roughly 50% of all infants born in the United States. And 61% of WIC participants reside in families with incomes below the poverty level. WIC helps to ensure infants’ and children’s normal growth, reduces levels of anemia, increases immunization rates, improves access to regular health care and social services and improves diets.

**NWA** endorses breastfeeding as the optimal nutrition choice through the first year of a child’s life and promotes the associated health benefits for the mother and infant. **NWA** is the education arm and the advocacy voice of the 9 million mothers and young children who participate in WIC and the nation’s 12,200 WIC service provider agencies. **NWA** is in full support of “The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding” to reduce barriers in communities for women who want to breastfeed.

***NWA’s** mission: providing leadership to promote quality nutrition services; advocating for services for all eligible women, infants and children; and assuring the sound and responsive management of WIC.*

Please direct all questions to **NWA** at 202-232-5492.