September 20, 2015

Members, The Florida Senate
Senate Office Building
Tallahassee, FL 32301

R/G: SB250 Family Law Position

Dear Senator:

The Florida Breastfeeding Coalition (FBC) is concerned about the long term implications of SB250 on the health and wellness of women, infants and children and opposes the mandatory time-sharing presumptions that threaten protective factors of exclusive breastfeeding.

The mission of the FBC is to improve the health of Floridians by working collaboratively to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. As a statewide coalition with clinical experts across the state of Florida in pediatrics, obstetrics and lactation we support the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations of exclusive breastfeeding for infants up to 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding as complementary foods are introduced for 1 year or longer. Compliance with a 50/50 timesharing premise compromises a mother’s ability to meet such recommendations.

Clinically, breastfeeding provides protective factors for mothers and infants by promoting positive attachment behaviors that reduce risks of maternal post-partum depression and infant attachment disorder as well as enhance cognitive development and infant immunity to communicable diseases. It is well known that parental separation is independently associated with at-risk behaviors regarding the child’s health. Mediating these implications are already considered with current Florida law that rules time-sharing based on the need of the child without the mandated 50/50 time sharing provision.

Currently no other state in the US presumes 50/50 time sharing. In Australia, where such time-sharing implications have been implemented, breastfeeding mothers experienced inconsistent advice from all facets of legal services, including opinions about the inappropriateness of breastfeeding for infants over 6 months of age. Contrary to evidence based practices, breastfeeding was considered only as nutrition, without recognition of its immunological, cognitive and security/comfort benefits. A father’s role in supporting exclusive breastfeeding is equally important in protecting optimal physical, emotional and social development of the child by avoiding long term separation from the breastfeeding mother.

In keeping with these special considerations, we kindly ask you to avoid passing at risk legal regulations that may pose long term effects of women, infants and children by opposing mandatory 50/50 time-sharing presumptions that threaten protective factors of exclusive breastfeeding.

Sincerely,
Jessica M. Gordon, MS, ARNP
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition Inc., President

Email - office@flbreastfeeding.org
Resources and Supportive Documents


