



HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES
Coalition of Georgia

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Georgia Becomes Second State in Nation to License Lactation Consultants

Atlanta, Georgia – May 2, 2016 – Governor Nathan Deal has signed into law HB 649, the Georgia Lactation Consultant Practice Act, making Georgia the second state, after Rhode Island, to license lactation consultants.

Federal law requires coverage for lactation services, but many insurance companies will only pay for the services of licensed healthcare professionals. Lack of insurance reimbursement has made clinical breastfeeding care prohibitively expensive for many. “We are grateful to Representative Sharon Cooper for working tirelessly to pass this important legislation,” stated Leah Aldridge, JD, IBCLC, president of Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia (HMHB). “This law will increase access to clinical lactation care for Georgia’s mothers and ensure the healthiest possible start in life for Georgia’s babies.”

Seventy-four percent of Georgia’s mothers leave the hospital breastfeeding, but only 19% are successful in meeting the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendation of exclusively breastfeeding their babies for the first six months.

Research shows that mothers who have access to lactation consultants have much higher initiation and duration rates of breastfeeding. Breast milk provides many health benefits to babies, including reducing the risks of obesity, type 2 diabetes, ear infections, SIDS, leukemia, asthma, gastrointestinal disorders such as inflammatory bowel disease and deadly necrotizing enterocolitis.

Practitioners seeking licensure to provide clinical lactation care will be required to become International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs), with prerequisites that include lactation specific training, college coursework, clinical hours, passage of a comprehensive exam and regular re-certification.

“We are thrilled that by passing this landmark legislation, Georgia has become a national leader in breastfeeding support,” says Elise Blasingame, Executive Director of HMHB. “We are very thankful for the efforts of our medical and community partners to make this a reality for Georgia’s families.”

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Since 1973, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia has served as the statewide voice for improved maternal and infant health outcomes and access to healthcare.