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NEWS RELEASE
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Health organizations hosting movie premiere of ‘Breastmilk,’ forming Douglas County breastfeeding coalition

Lawrence, Kan. — The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, Lawrence Memorial Hospital and La Leche League of Lawrence have organized a Lawrence movie premiere of “Breastmilk” Aug. 9 in recognition of World Breastfeeding Week. They’re also working to form a breastfeeding coalition with pediatricians and other community partners to help improve rates of breastfeeding in Douglas County.

“Breastmilk” will be shown at 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 9, at the Lawrence Arts Center, 940 New Hampshire St. The 90-minute documentary is about how parents cope with one of the most intimate decisions they will make in their lives and how those around them react. The movie, which is not rated, is free and open to the public.

One of the most highly effective preventive measures a mother can take to protect the health of her infant is to breastfeed. The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months of age, with continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to 2 years of age or beyond. However, in Kansas, although most mothers hope to breastfeed, and 73 percent of babies start out being breastfed, only 15 percent are exclusively breastfed 6 months later.

Cary Allen, a certified breastfeeding educator at the Health Department, said breastfeeding can be challenging at times, especially in the early days. Common issues are poor latching, breast soreness and low milk supply. When you couple these challenges with lack of support at the workplace or in public places, breastfeeding can become overwhelming. “Breastmilk,” the movie, takes an in-depth look at what happens among new parents who want to breastfeed and a whole culture that has made breastfeeding choices a matter of social debate.

The success rate among mothers who want to breastfeed can be improved through support from their families, friends, communities, employers and policymakers. “Given the importance of breastfeeding for the health and well-being of mothers and children, it is critical that we take action in our community to support breastfeeding,” Allen said.

The Health Department, LMH and La Leche League of Lawrence are working in collaboration with Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, Lawrence Pediatrics and others to establish a coalition to address the issue. “LMH is dedicated to supporting mothers who are breastfeeding at the hospital and in the

community,” said Traci Hoopingarner, director of the Family Birthing Center at LMH. “We are forming a breastfeeding coalition in Douglas County. This is one way to pool resources and develop services to reach the goal of meeting the WHO recommendation for exclusively breastfeeding for 6 months.”

At the movie premiere, there will be information about the new coalition, breastfeeding and breastfeeding support along with refreshments of milk and cookies. Donations also will be accepted to help establish a breastfeeding coalition.

Breastfeeding support groups in Lawrence include:

- **Breastfeeding Support Group**, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Mondays, Lawrence Memorial Hospital auditorium, 325 Maine St.
- **BIBS — Breast Is Best Social**, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, 200 Maine St., in the clinic waiting room.
- **La Leche League of Lawrence**, 7 p.m., second Tuesday of each month, lower level meeting room of Lawrence Memorial Hospital, 325 Maine St., and third Tuesday of each month, 10 a.m., 1834 Learnard Ave.

La Leche League is hosting a World Breastfeeding Week event:

- **Potluck lunch**, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 2, at South Park, 13th and Massachusetts streets. Water, lemonade, tea, ice and cups will be provided. Participants are asked to bring a dish or two to share and plates and eating utensils for family.