



June 22, 2015

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Duckworth,

On behalf of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) I write to strongly support the ***“Friendly Airports for Mothers Act.”*** We are happy to endorse a bill that will help mothers who are traveling engage in the very basic activity of feeding their babies.

This bill would require all large and medium hub airports in the United States (63 in total) to provide a private space in each terminal for mothers to express breast milk. Having a designated space respects breastfeeding as a lifestyle choice and shows a commitment to this important public health issue. For children, the benefits of consuming breast milk are significant, from increasing brain development to reducing the risks of obesity, diabetes, asthma, infections and even certain forms of leukemia, to name a few. For mothers, breastfeeding can reduce the risks of breast and ovarian cancer, rheumatoid arthritis and cardiovascular disease. ACNM believes that mothers who choose to travel with newborn babies should not have to sacrifice these positive health outcomes simply because they do not have a clean and private space to breastfeed.

In an October 2014 study conducted by the Breastfeeding Medicine medical journal, 62 out of the country’s 100 largest airports surveyed identified as “breast-feeding friendly.” However, only 8 out of the 100 airports offer suitable accommodations. ACNM applauds those individual airports that have made an effort to designate clean and private places to breastfeed or pump breast milk, such as Chicago Midway International Airport, which recently added a lactation room. We also applaud states such as California, who have passed laws requiring airports to become breastfeeding-friendly, but it is our hope that through the FAM Act, all states will soon follow suit.

A private environment for mothers to nurse their children, or express breastmilk is an important aspect of the design of our public structures. ACNM is also strongly supportive of mothers having the options to breastfeed in locations other than designated lactation lounges if they so choose, which provides them the most flexibility to assure that the needs of their children are met.

An objective of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2020 initiative is to increase the proportion of infants who have ever received breastmilk to 81.9%, to 60.9% for those infants who are receiving some breastmilk at 6 months, and to 34.1% for infants who are still receiving some breastmilk at 1 year.¹ It is ACNM’s view that the FAM Act will go a long ways towards promoting breastfeeding so these objectives may be achieved.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Maternal, Infant, and Child Health: Healthy People 2020,” 2010.

Thank you for your efforts to address these concerns for the women our members serve. Please contact Patrick Cooney at (202) 347-0034 x101 or via email at Patrick@federalgrp.com if you have questions regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ginger Breedlove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "G".

Ginger Breedlove, PhD, CNM, APRN, FACNM
President, American College of Nurse Midwives